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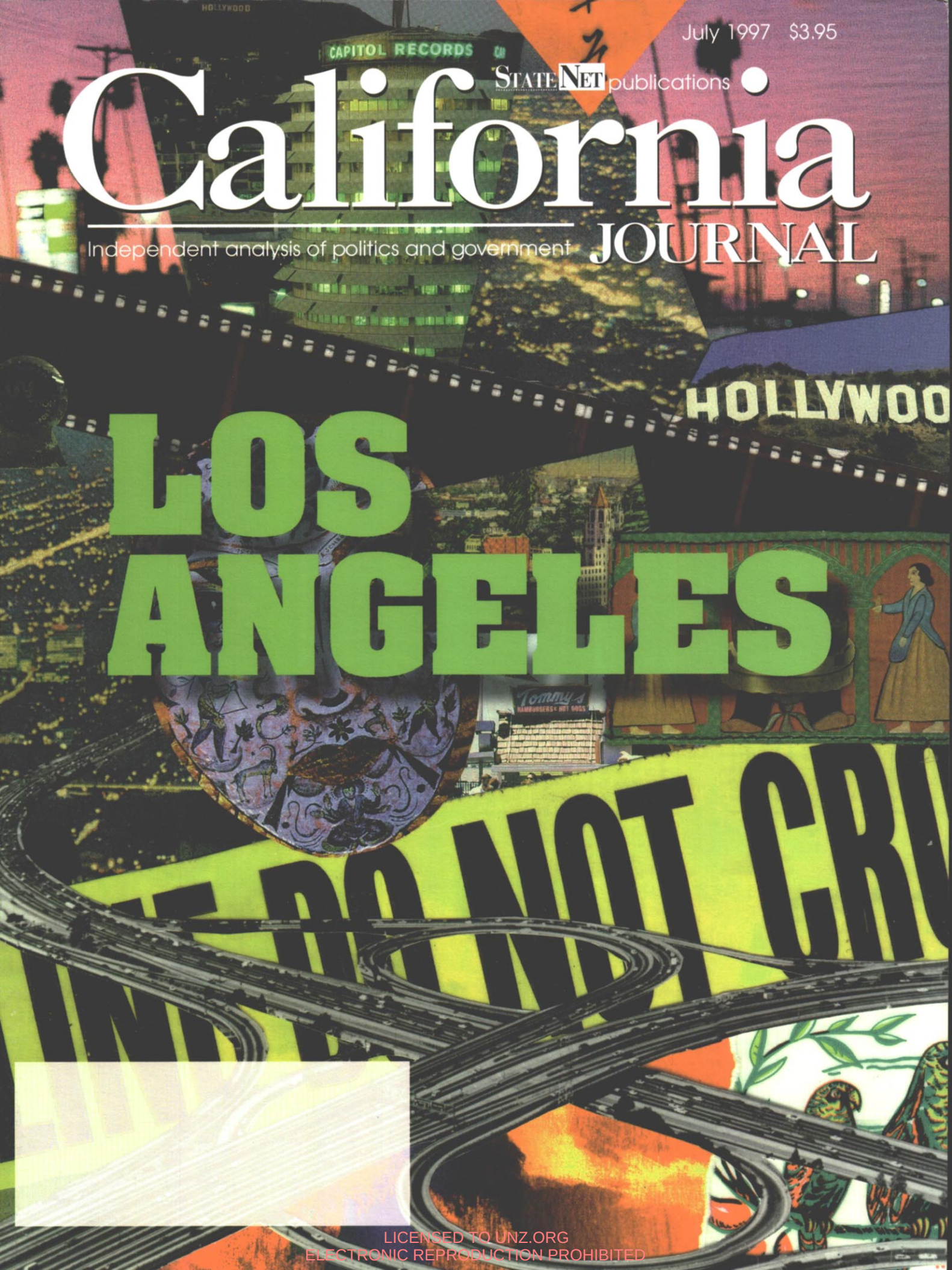
California JOURNAL

Independent analysis of politics and government



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California has the high

"Does pregnancy trap girls in poverty?
Or does poverty trap them in pregnancy?"

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n pregnancy and birth rate in the industrialized world. This series asks **why**...and what we should do.

The answer is important if we want to do something about either poverty or pregnancy.

If early pregnancy blocks teens' escape from poverty, we should help them wait until later.

But if teens who don't get pregnant remain just as poor as those who do, we need to look for other solutions.

Odds are 3 to 1 that a pregnant teenager is already poor.

***FACT:** Seven out of eight teens who give birth are already poor.*

The majority of teens are sexually active by 17. Not all get pregnant, by any means. But of those who do, poor teens—with a 28% pregnancy rate—are four times more likely to get pregnant than affluent teens (at 6%). What's making the difference?

Expectations, for one thing. Most teens living in poverty can't climb the ladder of education that could lead them out, and face a future at minimum wage—too little money, even full-time, to keep a family from poverty.

Poor teenagers appreciate the bleak truth confirmed by studies of income and employment. To delay giving birth gains them little or nothing compared to more affluent teenagers with college ahead of them.

Those who object to teen pregnancy should focus attacks on poverty instead.

Kristin Luker, professor of sociology and law at UC-Berkeley, is the author of *Dubious Conceptions: The Politics of Teenage Pregnancy.*

The ten California communities with the highest teen birth rates also have some of the highest poverty rates in the state—double the statewide average.

Can the cycle be broken by treating the symptom of teen pregnancy?

Fact: Poverty, not teen pregnancy, leads to low-birthweight babies. Studies show a mother's income, not her age, is the risk-factor endangering infant health.

Fact: Poverty, not teen motherhood, is more strongly linked with school failure. Mothers or not, affluent teens do better. Mothers or not, poor teens do worse.

Early pregnancy is a symptom of poverty. Reduce the child poverty these teens are growing up in, and pregnancy rates will fall as they have in other countries. Why not start?

We condemn teenagers who become pregnant instead of the society that has abandoned them.

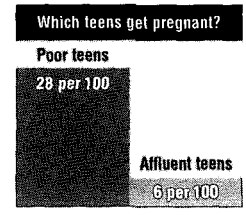
If teens giving birth lose little, it's because poverty has left them so very little to lose. California's teen poverty rate has doubled to 28%. At the same time school spending has fallen from 7th to 41st place.

Youth joblessness? It's fourth highest in the United States.

Teen pregnancy? California now ranks number one.

None of this is coincidence. While attention focuses on teen pregnancy, the real problem—poverty—is being ignored.

To really help, start asking which teens really need help the most...and why.



***FACT:** Poverty is the surest predictor of teen pregnancy. Prevention programs should focus on causes, not effects.*

This is one of many views of teen pregnancy in California. To consider the full range, send for our **free** reprint series by completing this coupon.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

The California Wellness Foundation
Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Initiative
466 Green St., Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94133

3A

Public Media Center Chart: Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1994.

Teen pregnancy is an adult problem.

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As you may have heard, our parent company and the parent company of San Diego Gas & Electric will be merging. Here at Southern California Gas Company, this is exciting news both for us and for our customers.

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JULY 1997
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Los Angeles — A Special Report

From its politics to its police force, from its media to its overall mentality, Los Angeles is the rough draft for the future of California, and arguably, for the rest of the United States. This month, *California Journal* devotes the entire issue to the many sides of Los Angeles: The city, the county...and the mystique.

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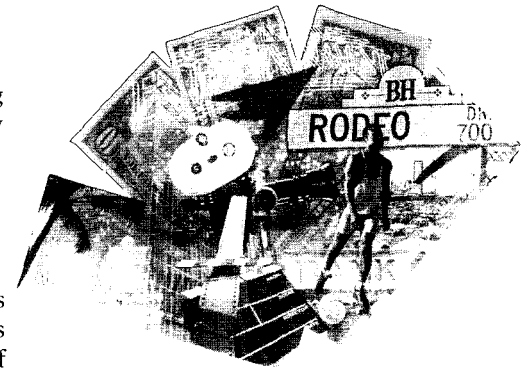
A distinguished broadcaster who makes his living exploring L.A.'s psyche on the airwaves reflects on the quarter century of change he's seen in his adopted hometown.
By Warren Olney



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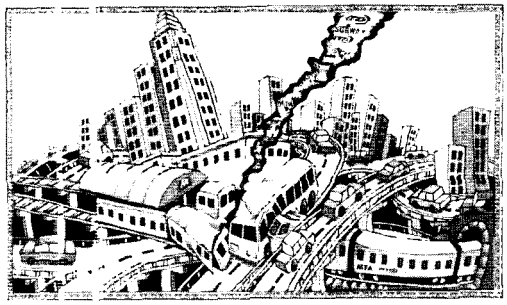

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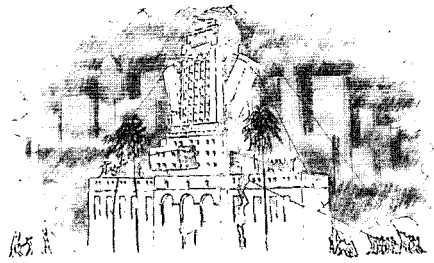

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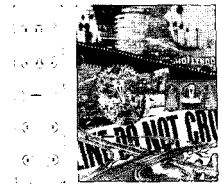

Collage by Meg McAneny

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Upfront
umbrage

Urban sprawl. Just how large is the city of Los Angeles? Large enough to swallow up several of the nation's more concentrated urban areas. A recent *Los Angeles Times* graphic showed the outlines of L.A.'s 469 square miles, then fit within those boundaries the outlines of the following major U.S. cities: Boston, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Manhattan. There was still room to spare.

Unfriendly rivalry. Adlai Stevenson once noted that a hypocrite is someone "who would cut down a redwood tree, then mount the stump and make a speech for conservation." This quote comes to mind in light of one bit of L.A. bashing from their generous northern cousins in San Francisco. The denizens of "Baghdad By The Bay" were voting on whether to sell bonds to build a new downtown stadium to house their precious football '49ers, and Los Angeles was one of the cities lined up to grab the Niners had the bonds failed. A campaign banner hung in support of bonds proclaimed, "They Stole Our Water. Don't Let Them Steal Our '49ers." Wait a minute. *Our* water? Which water would that be, exactly? The water that the citizens of San Francisco get from having thoughtfully flooded one of nature's wonders, the Hetch Hetchy Valley? Or is it the Delta water that is being slowly poisoned by salinity and habitat predation thoughtfully provided by the San Francisco Bay? The plain fact is that San Francisco is no more a water donor than Los Angeles. What was that line about casting the first stone?

Drudgery. A high-school graduate and self-described "media junkie" has figured out how to use the Internet to get on the "A" party list in Washington *and* Hollywood. Matt Drudge, a former CBS gift-shop drone who lives in Hollywood, operates a Web page called "The Drudge Report." Visually, the page is nothing flashy — just links to a laundry list of newspaper services and columnists. But what got Drudge noticed was the e-mail newsletter produced in conjunction with the Web site. Calling on a collection of "rats," "moles," and other subterranean wildlife, Drudge has put together a clever little gossip sheet which leans heavily to show-biz tidbits, but also tosses in some politics now and again. What has gotten Drudge noticed in Washington, though, is the way his page managed to scoop major newspapers ... *on their own stories!* Like on-line tip sheets such as *Hotline*, Drudge gets some of his stuff via e-mail from journalists looking to hype their stories. Unlike *Hotline*, though, Drudge puts his stuff out before the paper's subscribers see it, and he does it for nothing. And sometimes, the source of the leak is simply a mystery. Drudge freely admits he's not a journalist. If anyone needed further proof of that fact, they need only look at the disclaimer which accompanies his newsletter: "Information contained in this report is believed to be truthful..."

I was deeply unhappy, but I didn't know it because I was happy all the time.
— Harris K. Telemacher (Steve Martin), *L.A. Story*

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Two Cents commentary

Los Angeles

Last fall, when managing editor Steve Scott proposed dedicating an entire issue of *California Journal* to Los Angeles, the notion seemed so obvious as to make us wonder why we had not done so a decade ago. Perhaps we had not because we have focused much of our attention on Sacramento politics where Los Angeles has never seemed to wield political clout commensurate with its size and wealth. Although three of the four most recent governors hailed from Los Angeles County (Ronald Reagan, Jerry Brown and George Deukmejian), only Deukmejian may be said to have brought a true Los Angeles perspective to the office. The last Assembly speaker from Los Angeles was Bob Moretti, who quit that post in 1974. The last Senate president pro tempore from Los Angeles was David Roberti, who dwelt in the shadows cast by then-Speaker Willie Brown Jr. of San Francisco. The county's congressional oomph is suspect, as former *Journal* associate editor Laureen Lazarovici reports in this month's Washington column.

Political clout aside, the sheer numbers regarding Los Angeles speak to its significance. It is home to more than nine million people — three out of every 10 Californians. Its financial heft, expressed in terms of gross product, is estimated to be $282 billion in 1997 — nearly 30 percent of the California economy. More significant, Los Angeles, which suffered 70 percent of the state's job loss during the early 1990s, was the engine that drove the recent recession. Conversely, it is the engine that drives the state's recovery while providing a laboratory for economic transition from manufacturing and defense to international trade, finance and tourism. It is home to the two busiest ports in the United States — Long Beach and Los Angeles. Its school system is crowded with 1.5 million students — a third of whom are regarded as English-limited and who speak one of more than 100 languages as a mother tongue. And on and on and on.

But Los Angeles is more than numbers. It is attitude and myth. My first exposure to Los Angeles came in the summer of 1958 when I was bundled off to visit my grandmother, who had recently moved from our home to an apartment in Beverly Hills. At the time, I was an 11-year-old Illinois boy making his first foray beyond the boundaries of the upper Midwest, and as the United Airlines DC-7 glided slowly above L.A.'s urban vastness, the glamour and exotic flavor of the landscape rushed up to seize my imagination. Dorothy descending into Oz. Palm-lined boulevards, the turquoise sparkle of 10,000 backyard swimming pools, the Hollywood sign with its promise of movie and TV stars loitering on street corners, beaches stretched out before the Pacific Ocean, a panorama bathed in soft pastels that stood in stark contrast to the etched gray canyons of our metropolis — Chicago.

And somewhere, off in the unseen distance — Disneyland.

For a kid living on the banks of the Mississippi River, Disneyland was a billboard for the excitement and adventure to be found in Los Angeles. Never mind that Disneyland was not in the city of Los Angeles, or even in the county of Los Angeles. That geographic technicality was a notion both lost on and irrelevant to a boy from the remote east.

The misconceptions of a young midwesterner notwithstanding, Los Angeles often is defined by myth and misunderstanding. Every city has its legends, of course; visitors to Chicago still seek out the Biograph Theater where John Dillinger was gunned down some 60 years ago. But more than most cities, the image of Los Angeles seems to be culled from fable, whether it is that of Lana Turner being discovered at Schwabs Drugstore or of traffic perpetually snarled on freeways or of a rogue, racist police force.

The myths are significant. To many outside California, Los Angeles symbolizes all of the Golden State, yet its image of late has been tarnished by earthquakes, riots, gridlock, police beatings, gang wars and infamous trials that have stripped away important chunks of its once-glamorous facade. In addition, the attitude of Angelenos themselves toward their city is increasingly balkanized and lacking in self-esteem. No one hails from Los Angeles. Instead, they are from Malibu or Alhambra or Compton or the West Side or the Valley.

So, what, on the edge of the 21st century, *is* Los Angeles? And more important, where is it bound? Will it survive as an integrated whole, or will its various factions shred it? These are important questions, for all California will surely follow in its wake.

For this issue, Steve Scott has put together an impressive array of articles. They do not untie all of the knots surrounding Los Angeles, but taken as a whole they provide an excellent springboard for thoughtful study and debate about the future of California's most important county.

— *A.G. Block*

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Which Way, L.A.?

The host of an award-winning radio program, which explores the psyche of Los Angeles, takes his own personal journey through a troubled paradise

by Warren Olney

My family thinks I'm crazy to live in L.A. The Olneys are into their sixth generation in the very different world of Northern California. After the Civil War, my great-grandfather came West to practice law, and he flooded the Bay Area with descendents, many of whom are my cousins. My mother and sisters still live in Berkeley. My own children and their children live in Mill Valley and San Jose. If I want to see them, I have to go north. L.A. is not a place they want to visit.

Warren Olney, a veteran California broadcast journalist, hosts the award-winning radio program "Which Way, L.A." The program, which developed in the wake of the 1992 riots and explores issues of importance to the region, airs on KCRW-FM Santa Monica.

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Illustration by Meg McAneny

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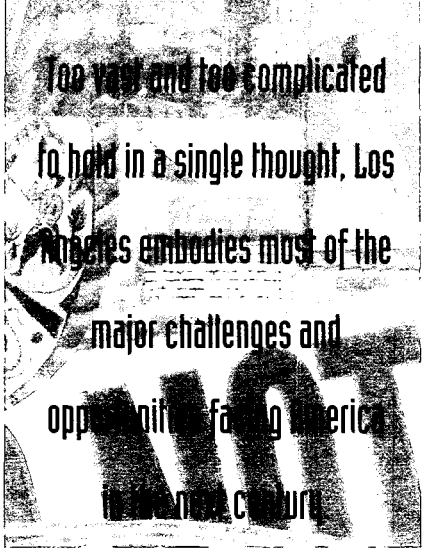
When I first moved here in 1972, we all agreed I was coming to a land of barbarous Philistines. But I needed to learn the business of TV news, and L.A. had become the major market in my home state. I thought I could get what I needed and quickly escape back to the gentler civilization I came from. Twenty-five years later, I'm still here, in a place that is often infuriating and ultimately baffling — but just too fascinating to leave. Too vast and too complicated to hold in a single thought, Los Angeles embodies most of the major challenges and opportunities facing America in the next century.

For the moment, the big surprise is how well Los Angeles is doing five years after the "riot," "rebellion," or "civil unrest" of 1992. Although there still is controversy over what to call it, there's no doubt it was the most violent, expensive and widespread disorder America has seen in this century. But in 1997, the rate of crime has been dropping fast. The recession is over, and unemployment is at "acceptable" levels. L.A.'s economy has survived the end of aerospace, discovered high-tech communications, and reorganized itself along entrepreneurial lines. L.A. stands to dominate the industries of the New World Order, and it is perfectly positioned for international trade.

But there still is a pervasive uneasiness, even among those who were not directly affected by rocks, bottles, gunfire or flame. We would like to believe that it can't happen here — but it did; and the images brought to us by saturation television coverage remain in our minds. It is not credible that such alienation, so deeply felt by so many, would disappear even in five years. And there is much evidence that we are increasingly different from one another.

In the 1980s alone, Greater Los Angeles grew by three million people — enough to populate a city the size of Chicago. By the mid-'80s, 78 languages were being spoken at Hollywood High School — "from Armenian to Zulu," a vice principal told me then. In 1997, 40 percent of the region is foreign born. Some urban neighborhoods are barely recognizable to people who lived in them only a few years ago. Once-monotonous suburbs are no longer homogeneous. "The Ethnic Quilt," published by California State University, Northridge, identifies 34 ethnic populations in Greater L.A. sizable enough to have staked out geographical locations of their own. And all 34 have sufficient integrity that their socio-economic status, occupational and industrial specializations can be described and their different patterns of behavior studied and compared. Many other definable groups are here, too, although they may be intact to lesser degrees.



But, despite the welcome improvement in the economy, it is not all that comfortable under the "ethnic quilt." In a recent poll by Loyola Marymount University's Center for the Study of Los Angeles, 61 percent said another riot is possible in the next five years, and they cited race relations as their primary source of concern. A similar number felt that way in 1992. Much has changed, but much has stayed the same.

In many quarters, there is nostalgia for the "California Dream" first created by the promoters and developers who for so long have sold Los Angeles to anyone who will buy. "I'm afraid that Studio City will lose its small town feel," says the vice president of the Studio City Residents Association. She is complaining about the $2.5 billion dollar expansion proposed by Universal Studios, an attraction already comparable to Disneyland in the millions of visitors it brings to her neighborhood every year. A leader of the Property Owners Association in nearby Sherman Oaks uses the same phrase at a charter revision commission meeting: "We want to have a great city that has a small town feel to it."

Surrounded by a megalopolis of 15 million people, they invoke images that have ceased to apply even to the rural Midwest. But maybe the notion that it is somehow possible to be insulated from the larger environment is what allows L.A. to endure. The same poll that showed fear of more rioting in the future also showed that respondents were upbeat about their own neighborhoods. They did not think the trouble would start close to home. Perhaps the "small town feel" is the illusion that makes L.A. liveable for many people. But it still is an illusion.

"Los Angeles," of course, is much larger than one city — or even one county made up of 88 cities. It is a vast region of mountains, deserts, river valleys and coastline, encompassing several climate zones and stretching from Ventura to Moreno Valley, and from Lancaster to Long Beach. Even Orange County is one of the many places collectively called "L.A." They constitute a single region because they are all parts of one of the world's great economies, inextricably linked and utterly dependent on one another. They are served, as I learned so long ago, by a single "media market," and they share the same popular culture through radio and TV.

But, obvious as these interconnections may be, the residents of Greater Los Angeles often are unwilling to recognize them. For the most part, as William Fulton remarks in his aptly named "The Reluctant Metropolis," "we have decided that we live somewhere else." The ever-more-distant suburbs are full of people who very consciously moved out, believing that smog, congestion and the other undesirable consequences of urban life would be somebody else's problems. Many of those who stayed behind have petitioned to have the names of their neighborhoods changed, so they can deny that they live in L.A. Others are moving behind walls, as if gated communities can be self-sufficient as well as "safe."

Bolstered by the argument that smaller is better, movements are underway to break up the L.A. Unified School District and even the city of L.A. Smaller may be better, but bigger is what is real. Fifteen million people aren't just going to go away, and whatever the emotional appeal of denial, it won't help prepare Los Angeles to cope with another reality that is often ignored. L.A.'s millions are spread out over territory that is geographically inappropriate for one of the world's great population centers, and the resultant problems of pollution, traffic congestion and an inadequate water supply are not susceptible to neighborhood solutions.They will require consensus, cooperation and concerted action region-wide.

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But the agencies assigned to the immense tasks of finding those solutions are, for the moment, flapping around like demented flamingos. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority's 13 elected board members want train and bus routes to go — almost literally — in 13 different directions (see page 34). The increasingly impatient federal government is threatening to cut off funds, and the promise of a region-wide transit system to move goods and people is in danger of devolving into perpetual gridlock. Despite its world-wide reputation for success in cleaning the air, the South Coast Air Quality Management District still is faced with the nation's worst air pollution, and it seems to be losing its way among disputes between businesses and environmentalists that seemed only recently to have been resolved. Always faced with a shortage of water, L.A. made great strides in conservation during the drought of the 1980's. But excess consumption is on the rise (leading my northern cousins to grumble about "our" use of "their" water), new pollutants are being discovered, and local water districts are locked in never-ending competition for that most precious of limited resources.

So, a profound question about the future of Greater L.A. is this: Will a population so diverse, so divided and so ambivalent have the emotional commitment and political will to contend successfully with any one of the problems which potentially threatens its way of life, let alone solve them all? Given the record, it's hard to be optimistic. Even though fires, floods, dry-spells and earthquakes are periodically devastating, our collective memory seldom lasts long enough to provide the resources needed for long-term fixes.

In the short run, troubling social issues beg for attention. Economic inequality is an ongoing scandal. In the city of L.A. alone, more people live in fire-trap converted garages than populate the entire city of Santa Monica. Welfare reform is widely expected to force many families onto the street. Disputes about immigration, affirmative action, and bilingual education — to name just a few — will continue to dramatize our differences.

Most of these problems are visible to some extent all over America. But nowhere except in Los Angeles are they all present at once. With so many close to the crisis point, L.A. — like it or not — will be forced to provide models for the rest of the nation — for the rest of the world, for that matter, much of which already looks and behaves according to the images that originate here. It is possible that L.A. can forge from its growing diversity some new American consensus, analogous to what has occurred in the past, but more complex — including, of course, those who historically have been left out. The energy, imagination and resources are available here for such a great thing to happen.

But we have looked on the face of chaos, and we know what the alternatives are. Balkanization, decline and eventual collapse are possible, too. Los Angeles continues to be the source of America's worst nightmares as well as its fondest dreams. As I tell my family in Northern California, I can't predict what will happen. But, with all that's at stake — including my own investment of 25 years — it's worth sticking around to find out what's next.

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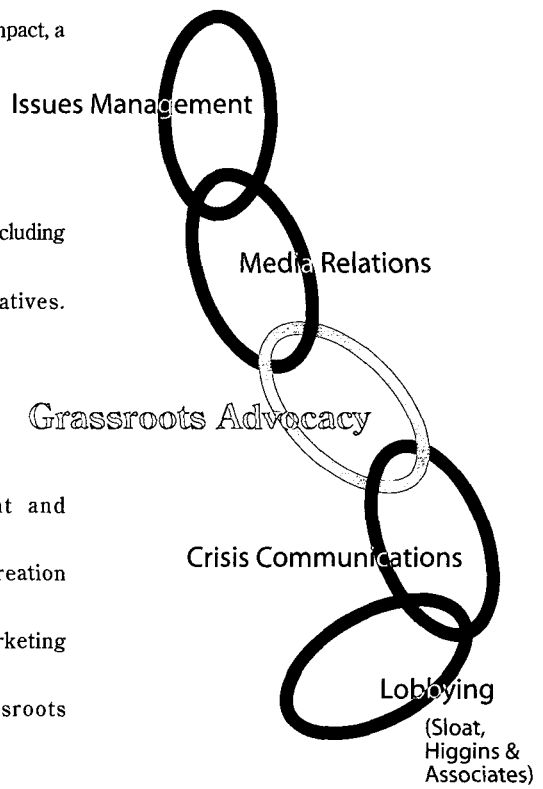

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LA SNAPSHOTS

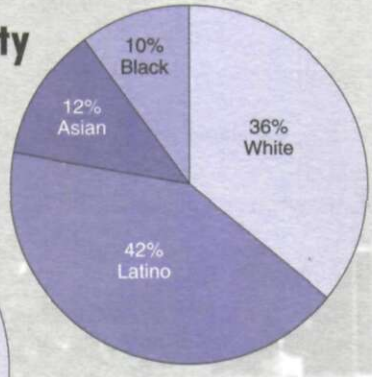
Population

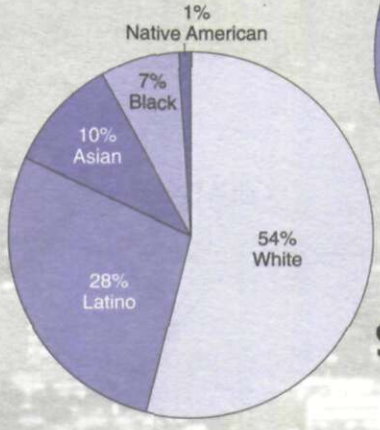
	1990 Census	1997 (est.)	% Change 1991-97
Los Angeles County	8,863,052	9,488,200	7%
City of Los Angeles	3,485,557	3,681,700	6%

Projected Population Growth	Current	2000	2010	2020
	9,488,200	9,889,000	11,274,600	12,795,100

Race/Ethnicity: 1995

Los Angeles County





Statewide

Cities over 100,00 population

Los Angeles	3,681,700
Long Beach	441,700
Glendale	195,600
Torrance	141,500
Pomona	141,400
Pasadena	138,900
Santa Clara	131,400
Lancaster	123,200
Inglewood	117,300
El Monte	115,100
Palmdale	114,900
West Covina	103,400
Burbank	102,500
Norwalk	100,900

Housing

Los Angeles County	Total Households	Single Family	Mobile Homes	Multi-family	Persons per Household
	3,240,879	1,781,271	55,675	1,403,933	3.005

Sources: CA Dept. of Finance, CA Dept. of Education, FBI Uniform Crime Statistics (City of L.A.), Economic Dev. Corp. of L.A. County

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Education

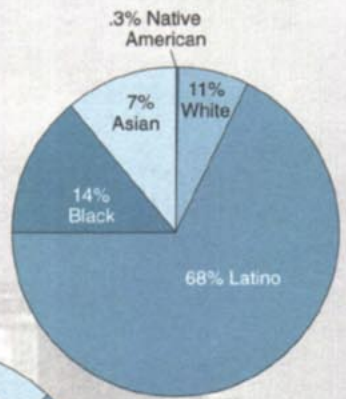
Total Enrollment

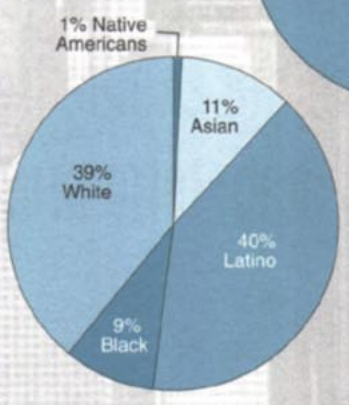
Los Angeles Unified	667,305
Total - LA County	1,549,833
Statewide	5,612,965

Higher Degrees (persons over 25)

High School Degree	70%
B.A. or higher	22.3%

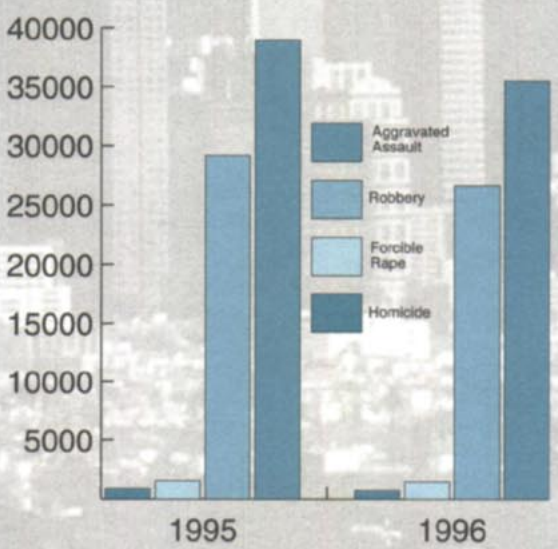
Racial/Ethnic Breakdown in Public Schools





Statewide

Crime



Percent Change from 1995-96	
Homicide	-16.5
Forcible rape	-8
Robbery	-13.5
Aggravated assault	-8.9

Misc

LA County Area	4,752 sq. miles
Number of cities	88
Los Angeles (largest city)	3,681,700
Vernon (smallest city)	80
Average temperature	64 degrees
Average rainfall	11.5 inches

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The morphing

Forcibly weaned of its dependence on defense, the economy of Los Angeles County is reinventing itself. Can the region whose decline sank the state's economy once again become the engine that fuels its long-term prosperity?

by Steve Scott

It has almost become a truism to refer to Los Angeles and its surrounding cities as being "laboratories for the 21st century." Los Angeles, it seems, is at the center of an immense social science project which will determine whether a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-everything society can survive without descending into constant civil strife. Every event, from the riots of 1992 to the mayor's race of 1997, is sized up in terms of what it says about the success or failure of the "grand experiment" in multi-culturalism.

The ethnic and cultural transformation of Los Angeles — and the complications that grow from that transformation — are as obvious to its residents as they are to the demographers. But there's another transformation under way in Los Angeles County — an economic transformation that is as organic as the societal shift and, at least potentially,

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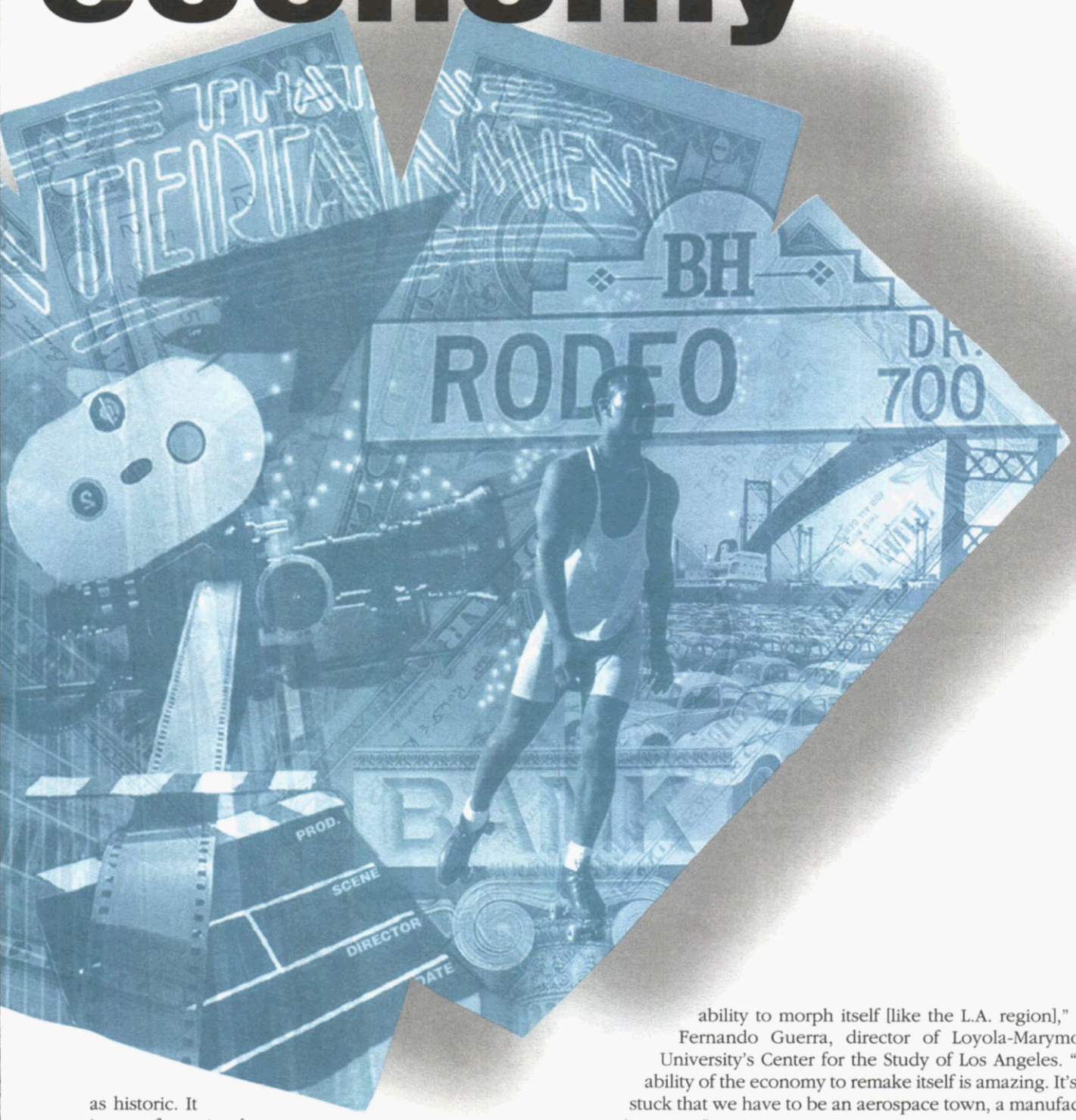
economy



as historic. It is a transformation that goes beyond the business cycle and standard economic indicators. While some of the change is simply a reflection of broader national trends, much of the transformation is an outgrowth of L.A.'s geographic location and its unique ethnic and cultural transition.

In the minds of many who study it, and are a part of its day-to-day workings, Los Angeles is building the economy of the 21st century.

"I don't think any other region in the world has the ability to morph itself [like the L.A. region]," said Fernando Guerra, director of Loyola-Marymount University's Center for the Study of Los Angeles. "The ability of the economy to remake itself is amazing. It's not stuck that we have to be an aerospace town, a manufacturing town."

That Los Angeles and its environs have begun to think beyond aerospace is itself something of a revelation, albeit one borne of necessity. Throughout most of its history, Los Angeles has lived and died by the sword. Whether it was the hot war of the 1940s or the Cold War of the '50s, '60s, '70s, and '80s, Los Angeles County has been a defense powerhouse, home to Lockheed, McDonnell-Douglas, Northrop, Rockwell International, and a legion of smaller manufacturers and support industries. The strength of aerospace helped

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cushion the blow suffered to the region in the 1960s and '70s, when several large manufacturers, notably in the automobile industry, closed plants then located in the city's urban core. By 1988, at the zenith of the Reagan-era defense buildup, Los Angeles County was home to more than a quarter of a million aerospace and high-tech jobs.

Then it happened. The Cold War ended. Bases closed. Defense projects were shelved or scrapped. The federal gravy flowing California's way slowed from a river to a stream. The numbers tell the story. Between 1988 and 1995, aerospace and high-tech employment dropped by more than half in Los Angeles County alone. Sixty percent of the aerospace and high-tech job loss suffered statewide during that period occurred in Los Angeles County.

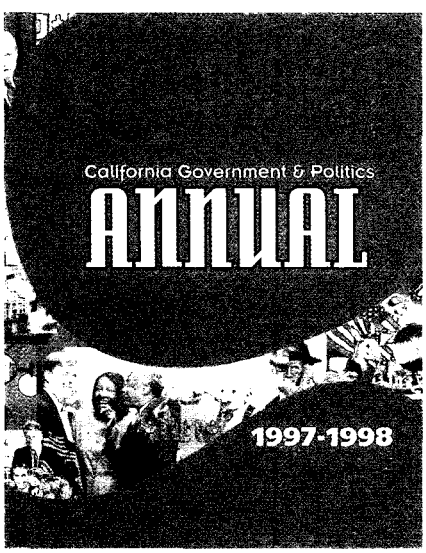
It wasn't just aerospace that suffered during the early 1990s. The consolidation of Security Pacific Bank with Bank of America and of First Interstate with Wells Fargo meant that no major California bank was headquartered in Los Angeles. The desertion of many finance jobs from the central city caused office vacancy rates to climb above 20 percent in downtown L.A., even as they were falling on the more affluent Westside. The combined effects of the recession, the riots of 1992, and the 1994 Northridge earthquake put a damper on the region's tourism industry. Even the home-town business — entertainment — began looking to states such as Florida for expansion, lured by tax incentives and the availability of space for theme parks and the like.

"Seventy-one percent of the total job loss in the state happened in Los Angeles County," said Jack Kyser, chief economist for the Economic Development Corporation of Los Angeles County. "Los Angeles has been tested as no major urban area has been tested."

Ironically, it was one of the area's most severe tests — the 1992 rioting which followed the acquittal of four officers in the beating of Rodney King — which provided the first inklings that the situation was not as dark as it seemed for the L.A. economy. As community leaders, economists, and political leaders fanned out into the urban communities hardest hit by the riots, one of the first things they discovered was the presence of a sizeable manufacturing base. Toy manufacturers, apparel manufacturers, furniture manufacturers. Almost all were relatively small, but collectively they made the Los Angeles metropolitan area the nation's second-largest manufacturing center.

"The idea that manufacturing had disappeared is a myth," said Linda Griego, who until recently headed up the community restructuring project Rebuild LA. "There were plants that closed in the early '70s ... the rubber plants, the tire plants, the [General Motors] plant in South Gate. But at the same time they were closing in Texas, in Michigan, all over. What wasn't being measured was the manufacturing of small businesses that were growing despite the recession."

Concurrent with the development of local manufacturing has been the muscular expansion of the volume of trade flowing through the twin ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. The two ports rank one and two in the nation in container volume, and one and two on the West Coast in total tonnage. In 1993, the Los Angeles customs district, which



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includes both ports and the area's international airports, passed New York to become the nation's largest, with the combined dollar value of goods flowing into and out of the port topping $170 billion. While the gap between exports and imports mirrors the national trade gap, some observers note that services, such as film and television rights, tourism, and engineering and design services, are major, un-measured export commodities offered by Los Angeles.

Many see the region's cultural and ethnic diversity as a key element of L.A.'s success in international trade and small manufacturing. Immigrant entrepreneurs and a large immigrant labor force have fueled the manufacturing sector, particularly in the toy and apparel industries. Between 1987 and 1992 the number of Latino- and Asian-owned businesses in Los Angeles County nearly doubled, and the growth has accelerated as the economy has improved. South Central Los Angeles, ground zero during the 1992 riots, is now about 50 percent Latino and is home to an industrial output larger than that of 30 states. For international traders, the region's diversity is a magnet not only for trade itself, but for investment.

"Unlike the [San Francisco] Bay Area, this is an open system," said David Abel, who publishes several newsletters tracking investment in Los Angeles. "It's not controlled by some civic elite. People can put new combinations together and create their dreams."

Of course, creating and marketing dreams has been a going concern in Southern California since Hollywood was still Hollywoodland, and L.A.'s dream factories have recommitted to the region with a growth spurt unprecedented since Hollywood's "Golden Era." Since 1988, more than 120,000 entertainment industry jobs have been created, almost as many jobs as were lost to the aerospace contraction. While the $8 billion Dreamworks studio complex in Playa del Rey is the most visible and attention-grabbing project, Dreamworks also is building a new animation studio in Glendale. Disney, too, is building an animation facility. Warner Brothers, Universal, NBC, and CBS are expanding. Sensing that the golden goose was hunting down greener pastures, the City of Los Angeles' Film Commission streamlined its permitting processes, resulting in more than a 60 percent increase in the number of filming permits issued between 1994 and 1996.

Much as the aerospace giants had their support industries, entertainment also has hives of support industries springing up around the producers. At least 130 different companies in the five-county region including Los Angeles are busily creating digital effects, and another 200 or so are involved in post-production. Soundstages are springing up faster than plastic surgery clinics, and an estimated 130,000 people in Los Angeles work in the multimedia industry, creating computer games, CD-ROMs and web sites. In fact, one estimate puts the number of technology-related jobs in Los Angeles County at 330,000, and the number of firms at 19,000.

"There is a big technology sector here," said Tom Leiser, economist for UCLA's Business Forecasting Project. "We don't have the Intels or the Hewlett Packards here, but there are thousands of smaller firms."

Coupled with the new booms in the growth industries of entertainment, technology, and trade have been the steady return of bulwark economic drivers like tourism and aerospace. In the case of aerospace, it is mostly a question of having reached bottom. Aerospace employment began to tick up a little in 1996, fueled by the involvement of area companies in the development of the X-33 reusable space shuttle. Merger-enriched Boeing is the area's largest employer, and firms supplying the aircraft giant continue to develop. "You can look at aircraft jobs as a modest growth sector over the next couple of years," predicted Steven Levy, director of the Palo Alto-based Center for the Continuing Study of the California Economy.

As for tourism, the resurgence began in 1995, fueled by, in Kyser's words, "'Baywatch,' 'Melrose Place,' and O.J. Simpson." According to the Economic Development Corporation, Los Angeles is the number-two most popular tourist destination in the nation, behind Las Vegas. And when Disneyland and the other Orange County attractions are thrown in, Southern California leads all comers. On the horizon are the opening of a new Getty Museum in Westwood, anticipated to be one of the nation's largest new art muse-

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ums, and a major expansion of Universal Studios.

On paper, all of these developments would seem to signal a region on the rebound. Yet none but the most ardent booster is prepared to declare that "L.A.'s back." Although moving in the right direction, overall employment growth in Los Angeles County still lags behind many of the surrounding counties and the state as a whole. Unemployment in the urban core, particularly among African-American teenagers, runs at double-digit rates. Home values, which dropped precipitously during the recession, remain flat, and construction permits for new residential housing in Los Angeles County are off a third from the number issued in 1992. Although industrial construction is starting to come back, construction of new office space is still a third of its pre-recession level, and new hotel construction has disappeared almost completely.

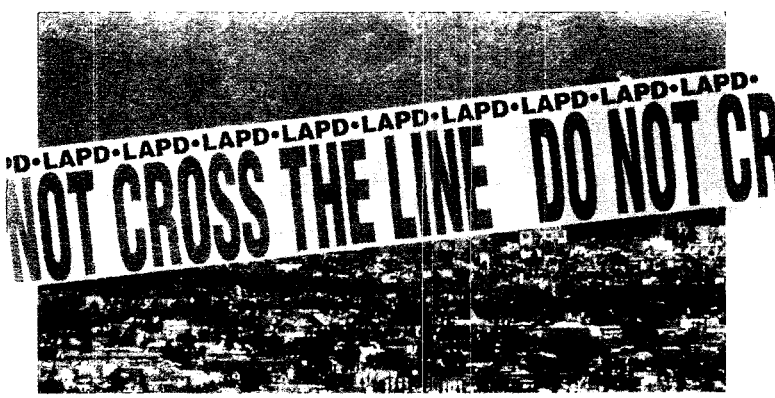
Tensions between business, labor and local government have also hampered L.A.'s recovery efforts. Notwithstanding the city's efforts to streamline film permitting, the City of Los Angeles retains the image of a place unfriendly to business. "What you constantly run into is the business tax schedule," said Kyser. "Los Angeles city is the most expensive place to do a development." Organized labor, meanwhile, has stepped up its recruiting efforts, targeting workers in the low-wage, low-benefits apparel and toy manufacturing sectors. While this organizing rankles business leaders, labor's advocates say the organization efforts are merely a bid to ensure that workers see their share of the region's recovery.

"It's about the stabilization of a working class," said Loyola Marymount's Guerra. "Labor has intertwined itself with the Latino community [and] will play a significant role, more so than ever before."

Most of L.A.'s economic boosters, however, see their biggest problem as simply one of image. The specter of the 1992 riots (see story below) has not only soured outsiders on Los Angeles, but has also affected how Angelenos view

Rebuilding South Central

There are still a lot of vacant lots in the areas ravaged by the 1992 riots. But there are also a lot of rebuilt businesses, and some legitimate reasons for encouragement.



Many of the challenges facing Los Angeles on the road to economic recovery are typical of large urban areas. Few cities of any size in the nation can point with any more pride to their own urban unemployment rates than L.A. can. But complicating the equation for Los Angeles are the lingering physical and psychological effects of the 1992 riots, which left 55 people dead, some 2000 more injured, and property losses totalling roughly $1 billion.

In the five years since the civil disturbances, a majority of what was burned down has been rebuilt. The area known as the Crenshaw District has shown particular improvement, with fast-food and strip malls as prominent there as they are in suburbia. The corner of Florance and Normandie, one of the riots' more notorious flash points, now boasts a shiny new auto parts store. Nearly $1 billion in government loans and grants, and some $389 million in corporate investment, has occurred in the riot areas in the last five years.

More money is also in the pipeline to help the riot-ravaged areas. A massive Community Development Bank, flush with $750 million in available loan money, started up in June 1996. Not a bank in the traditional sense, the project's aim is to seed entrepreneurs and encourage them to start and expand businesses in depressed urban areas.

In addition to the big money aid, smaller community organizers have also been cajoling money from in and out of the community for rebuilding. One such organizer, Juanita Tate of the Concerned Citizens of South Central, is credited with putting together five affordable housing projects and is involved with a shopping center project. "She's just making a difference in her own quiet way," said Linda Griego of Rebuild LA.

"I can show you the jobs," added Griego. "If you ask me, 'Are the commercial areas what they should be, what they could be?' I would tell you they're not. But you can look at the glass as half-full or half-empty."

For many who have lived and worked in the area, though, the "half-empty" part of the glass is painfully visible. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, roughly one of three buildings destroyed or significantly damaged in the civil disturbances haven't been rebuilt. Between 150 and 200 businesses wrecked by the riots have not reopened. Created amid an avalanche of corporate public-relations bluster, Rebuild LA was forced to reassess its mission and scale back the ambitious prediction of its first czar, former baseball

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themselves The more ardent economic boosters bitterly deride what one observer called "the vacant-lot mentality," saying that too much attention is paid to what is dysfunctional, rather than what is functional.

"It's almost become chic to bash Los Angeles," said Kyser. "People said if you want to poke fun at an area, go poke fun at L.A. That's always an easy mark."

The perception of Los Angeles as a high-tax, high-cost crime factory has cost it business and is making it harder for companies to attract talent. But boosters are fighting back. In addition to the new Getty Museum, efforts are under way to spruce up downtown Los Angeles, with plans for a new sports arena, a new cultural center, new state office buildings, and a new Catholic cathedral. Local business leaders are also taking steps to make the region's indigenous workforce more competitive. The remnants of Rebuild LA have been folded into a new cooperative venture with the community colleges under the name LA Prosper.

"Our biggest concern is staying competitive if employees are not trained with newest technology," said Griego.

Ultimately, though, it is the perception Los Angeles has of itself that could spell success or failure not only for the "grand experiment" in multiculturalism, but for the ability of Los Angeles to become a regional economic powerhouse. Inter-governmental squabbling between the city of Los Angeles and the 87 other cities in the county have hampered the economic resurrection. The massive Alameda Corridor project, which would link downtown Los Angeles with the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles via dedicated rail and truck routes, has been hampered by lawsuits filed by several cities that lie along the route. Ultimately, the co-existence of these entities may wind up as important as racial and ethnic co-existence to the region's economic rebirth.

"The two letters 'L' and 'A' are the world's greatest trademark," said Kyser. "The other 87 cities have to become comfortable being a part of Los Angeles."

commissioner Peter Ueberroth, that more than $1 billion in corporate investment was headed L.A.'s way. Only a handful of the new supermarkets promised in the months after the riots have materialized.

"Rebuild LA has fallen on its face," said Jarrette Fellows Jr., managing editor of the *L.A. Watts Times*, a weekly paper targeting African-American readers in South Central Los Angeles. "A lot of people are very cynical about it. There are still a lot of ugly lots throughout South Central."

African Americans aren't the only ones with a lingering cynicism about L.A.'s revival. Between a third and a half of all the property damage from the riots was suffered by Korean-owned businesses, much of the damage centered in the area known as Koreatown. Even as property values have ticked up in South Central, they remain stagnant in Koreatown. Many of the Korean-owned businesses destroyed in the disturbances were "Mom and Pop" liquor stores and small groceries that sold alcohol. When the time came to rebuild and reopen, most Korean merchants found themselves confronted by opposition from local community groups who didn't like having liquor stores in their neighborhoods. "Less than a third of the businesses have been reopened," said Angela Oh, a second-generation Korean-American attorney who has become something of a spokesperson for her community. Many simply moved out of the area or back to Korea. More disturbing to Oh than the numbers is the sense among many in the Korean community that they are being targeted because of their ethnicity.

"There's an uncomfortable feeling that that's part of it," said Oh. "There is a hostility that I can see both with Latinos and African-Americans who don't like to see Asian entrepreneurs in their community."

Those on the other side of the discussion deny there is any overt racism to the move against liquor stores. Griego points to examples where liquor stores owned by African-Americans received the same treatment. Fellows insists the attitude between African-Americans and Koreans is one of "tolerance." But some of the strains linger, affecting not only Koreans but Latinos and other largely immigrant ethnicities. "In a multi-cultural society, you're going to have tension," said Guerra. "In any urban environment, there's going to be tension."

How that tension is addressed will tell the tale about the "grand experiment," but there are more than a few signals suggesting Los Angeles may not be the cauldron of racial tension it is sometimes portrayed to be. For one thing, L.A.'s still-burgeoning immigrant community is also its most optimistic sector. Polling conducted by Loyola and the *Los Angeles Times* showed Asians and Latinos by and large more optimistic than blacks or whites about the region's economic and racial future. Some demographers also point to growing integration in schools and the workplace, the development of a vibrant Latino middle class, and the increasing rates of racial intermarriage as signs that the racial divides are slowly breaking down.

"In Los Angeles County, there were 700 hate crimes [last year], but there were 5000 intermarriages," said Pepperdine University demographer Gregory Rodriguez. "All we have are misery indices. All we know how to do is measure dysfunction."

"Predicting the future is risky," concluded author Earl Ofari Hutchinson in a *Los Angeles Times* editorial. "But enough positive change has happened in Los Angeles to make me believe there is more cause for hope than despair."

— *Steve Scott*

The 1992 Civil Disturbance

Date:	April, 29, 1992
Primary area of impact:	South Central Los Angeles
Number of dead:	55
Number injured:	2000
Number of buildings destroyed or damaged:	1100
Number of retail stores damaged:	700
Number still to be rebuilt:	150
Total estimated dollar loss:	$1 billion
Number of disaster loan applications:	3,400
Total amount of government assistance:	$900 million
Corporate pledges:	$497 million
Total corporate reinvestment to date:	$388 million

Source: Rebuild LA

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Glass Half Full

Glass Half Empty

Economic Base -1995

Rank	Industry	Employment (in 1,000)
1	Business & Professional Management Services	401.4
2	Health Services	267.2
3	Tourism	249.8
4	Direct International Trade	246.0
5	Wholesale Trade	235.7
6	Movie/TV production	223.0
7	Technology	178.1
8	Apparel	142.0
9	Financial Services	113.1
10	Agriculture/food mfg.	50.3

International Trade

Los Angeles Customs District

(includes ports of Long Beach & Los Angeles)

$170.1 billion —Total Value of International Trade *(Highest in US)*

102.6 million —Total Tonnage *(Highest in US, Fourth-highest in the world)*

Comparison of Export Commodities

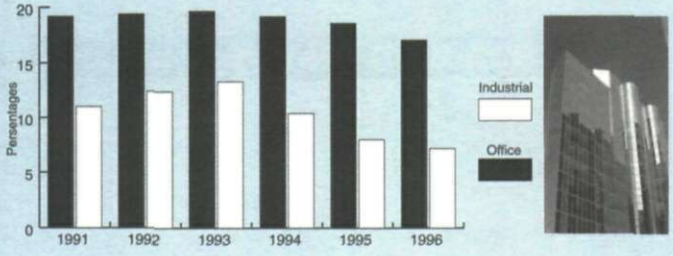
Top 5 Export Commodities — 1991

Aircraft and Spacecraft
Integrated Circuits
Parts for Aircraft and Spacecraft
Data Processing Equipmeht and Parts
Parts for Typewriters, Office Machines

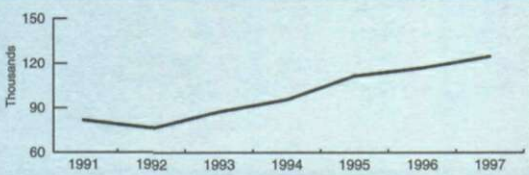
Top 5 Export Commodities — 1996

Electronic Macinery, Sound & TV equipment
Noneelectric Machinery and Parts
Optic, Photo, Medical, Surgical Instruments
Aircraft Spacecraft and Parts
Motor Vehicles

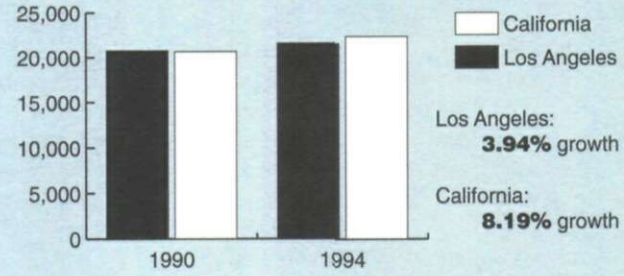
Vacancy Rates Los Angeles County



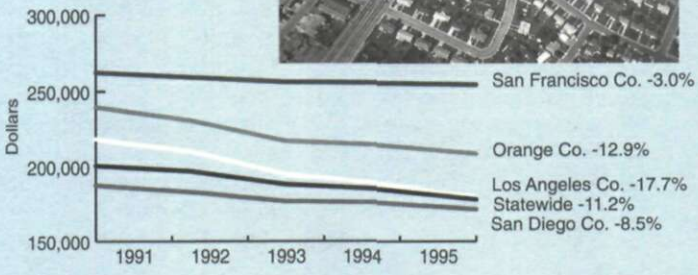
Motion Picture Production Employment



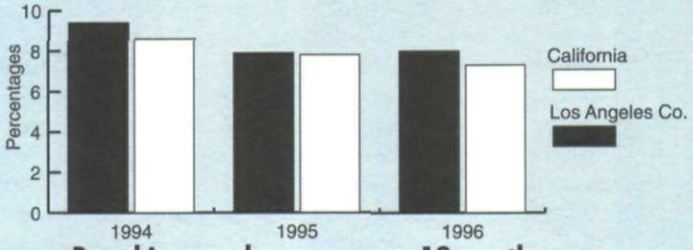
Personal Income Growth



Median Single Family Home Prices



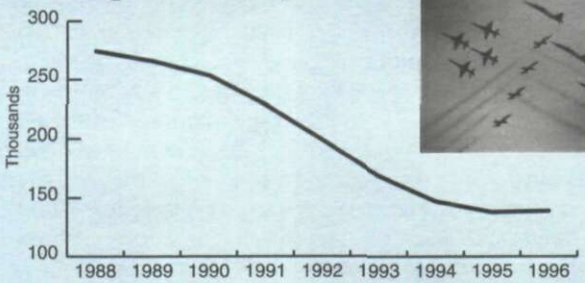
Unemployment Rate



Based in annual average over 12 month

Aerospace/High Tech Employment

Los Angeles County



Total Decline,1988-1996: 49.3%

Total Statewide Aerospace Job loss Occuring in L.A. County: 64.5%

Source: Economic Development Corporation of Los Angeles County

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The New Blue Line

A police force in transition searches for

by Lou Cannon

Six years after the Rodney King incident and five years after the deadly riots of 1992, the Los Angeles Police Department is haunted by conflicting legacies and competing notions of police work as it seeks a new chief that will lead it into the 21st century.

"The LAPD has changed drastically in the last five years, but it's not clear what it's become," observed Lieutenant John Dunkin, an LAPD veteran who directs homicide detectives in the violent South Bureau. "We're struggling to find an identity as a kinder, gentler police force that still does aggressive police work."

Similarly, Raymond Fisher, president of the Los Angeles Police Commission, sees the LAPD as emerging from an identity crisis and "desperately" in need of a chief who can carry out a mission of reform. "All the elements are in place

---

Lou Cannon is an award-winning correspondent for The Washington Post *and author of five books, including the Ronald Reagan biography, "The Role of a Lifetime." His latest book on the Rodney King case and the Los Angeles riots is due out in November 1997.*

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leadership

for a different kind of LAPD," said Fisher, who recently was nominated by President Bill Clinton to the number-three post at the U.S. Department of Justice. "We need a leader who can articulate this new direction and who has credibility both with the community and within the department."

The LAPD is a vital arm of government in vast Los Angeles. The framers of the city charter distrusted politics and kept elective offices to a minimum. Each of the 15 City Council members represents some 230,000 people, many of whom find the LAPD their most visible link with a distant city government.

The old LAPD had few doubts about its identity. During the four decades after William Parker was installed as chief in 1950, the LAPD forged a reputation as a militant bastion of police professionalism. Parker turned a ragtag police force into a well-trained and mobile department with a military esprit de corps. Since the department had proportionally fewer officers than police forces in other big cities, Parker made it a point of pride to do more with less. The LAPD, in a phrase he made famous, was the "thin, blue line" that protected law-abiding society from criminals.

The LAPD of the Parker era attracted a national following because of the popular *Dragnet*, created by Jack Webb for radio and moved to television in 1952. Webb starred as LAPD Sergeant Joe Friday, who wanted "just the facts" and quick arrests. Parker and Webb formed a symbiotic relationship that gave Webb access to police files and Parker the propaganda benefits of a top-10 program that glorified the LAPD. As Parker put it, "*Dragnet* was one of the great instruments to give the people of the United States a picture of the policeman as he really is. It was most authentic. We participated in the editing of the scripts and in their filming. ... This program showed the true portrait of the policeman as a hard-working, selfless man, willing to go out and brave all sorts of hazards and work long hours to protect the community."

Even in the authoritarian '50s, not everyone accepted this view. Liberals were disturbed by what they saw as the LAPD's cavalier attitude toward civil liberties. Blacks and Latinos complained of discrimination at the hands of a police force that was mostly white. But the *Dragnet* image endured until March 3, 1991, when it was shattered in seconds by the

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videotape of the Rodney King beating.

King, a muscular African-American who had been drinking heavily, led police on a long, high-speed chase in the middle of the night. He later said that he feared being sent back to prison, from which he had been recently released, for violating his parole. After he pulled over, King hurled off his back officers who tried to handcuff him. When an electronic stun gun failed to subdue him, King was beaten into submission by more than 50 blows from metal police batons. Unknown to police, the beating (although not the prior attempts to subdue King) had been videotaped by George Holliday, an amateur cameraman. Holliday was given the brush-off when he called a police station to report the incident. He took the videotape to KTLA, the station on which he watched the local news. KTLA deleted 13 seconds of Holliday's tape — three seconds that show King charging at a police officer and 10 seconds of blurry footage — and aired the rest. The video, 68 seconds long in its edited version, provoked a worldwide furor and reverberations that are still being felt within the LAPD.

Public outrage prompted Mayor Tom Bradley, a longtime foe of LAPD Chief Daryl Gates, to appoint a commission of inquiry headed by Warren Christopher, an eminent Democratic lawyer who later became President Bill Clinton's secretary of state. Christopher was no stranger to police issues. He had been vice chairman of the commission that investigated the Watts riot, which raged for nine hot August nights in 1965, claimed 34 lives, mostly African-Americans, and turned the community's business district into charred ruins. One of the questions that lingered after that riot was whether the LAPD had used indiscriminate force to quell it.

Then-Governor Edmund G. (Pat) Brown, seeking a third term in 1966, was under fire for supposed lenience toward student demonstrators and wanted to show his firmness. He put John McCone, a hard-line former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, in charge of the commission of inquiry. Christopher wrote the draft of the McCone Commission report, but he had little room to maneuver between the liberal but politically nervous Brown and the conservative McCone. The report, as Bill Boyarsky of the *Los Angeles Times* observed, was "a compromise at best, a whitewash at worst." It was particularly timid in assessing the role of Parker and the LAPD, who were absolved of any wrongdoing.

The King incident gave Christopher a chance to make amends, and he made the most of it. Christopher is highly respected within the legal community, and he was able to persuade top attorneys to serve without pay. In 100 days, the Christopher Commission produced a heavily documented report that blamed Gates for failing to discipline "problem officers" for repeated use of excessive force and made myriad recommendations for improving police procedures. The report also described racism and sexism as serious problems within the LAPD. While the Christopher Commission made headlines by calling for Gates to step down, its most significant proposal was for an amendment to the city charter that would limit future chiefs to two five-year terms and strengthen the authority of the civilian Police Commission.

Protected by civil service, Gates survived for nearly a year after Christopher's report. Meanwhile, the four LAPD officers accused of using excessive force against Rodney

King succeeded in their efforts to have the trial moved out of Los Angeles. On April 29, 1992, a jury in Simi Valley acquitted the defendants of all charges, except for deadlocking on a single count against one officer. Within hours, a riot erupted in South Central Los Angeles.

Before the disorders were quelled five days later with help from the National Guard and outside law enforcement agencies, rioting had spread over a wide area of Los Angeles and Long Beach. Fifty-four people died, the highest toll in a U.S. civil disturbance since the Draft Riot of 1863 in New York City, and another 2,328 people were injured. More than 860 structures were destroyed by fire and 5,000 businesses damaged or looted.

What remained of the LAPD's *Dragnet* reputation also was a casualty. Despite warnings of trouble if the defendants were acquitted in Simi Valley and two hours' advance notice of the verdicts, the LAPD had been hesitant and unprepared. Lacking tear gas or other non-lethal weapons, an outnumbered LAPD contingent retreated at a critical moment from the intersection of Florence and Normandie. Soon afterward, news helicopters televised grim footage of Reginald Denny being dragged from his cement truck and savagely beaten at the intersection. Later that night, hundreds of police officers crowded into a command post, chafing for action while their leaders dithered and Gates toured the city by helicopter. The next day, armies of looters roamed poor neighborhoods, unimpeded by police.

"The riots were devastating to us and to the city," said Bayan Lewis, then a deputy LAPD chief and now interim chief.

Lewis believes that the LAPD learned useful lessons from the King incident, and he welcomed many of the Christopher Commission recommendations. But the riots were another matter. Before the riots, even the LAPD's critics gave the department credit for effectiveness. Afterward, even the LAPD's staunchest supporters acknowledged that it had lost its edge.

The fallout from the riots was immediate. Gates lost the support of the middle-class homeowners who were his political base and retired two months later. As his replacement, a Police Commission headed by civil libertarian Stanley Sheinbaum recruited Philadelphia Police Commissioner (chief) Willie L. Williams, who became the first African-American and the first outsider to head the LAPD. In June 1992, three weeks before Williams was installed, voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition F, the measure proposed by Christopher to limit the terms of police chiefs. Mayor Bradley, his reputation damaged by the riots, decided not to seek a fifth term. He was succeeded in 1993 by millionaire entrepreneur-attorney Richard Riordan, who pledged to add 3,000 new LAPD officers and campaigned on a slogan that he was "tough enough to turn L.A. around."

Both Williams and Riordan made promising starts. In the

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troubled post-riot months, Williams was welcomed as a healing presence. He launched a speaking campaign to restore public confidence in the LAPD, and he emphasized tactical training to improve police response to future civil disturbances. Riordan worked to upgrade the equipment and working conditions of a department that had been starved by years of budgetary neglect that LAPD officials blamed on passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 as well as Bradley's resistance to spending money on the police. The neglect had proven costly in the riots, where high-mileage patrol cars broke down, outmoded radio equipment failed, and helicopters malfunctioned at critical moments.

Many of these shortcomings have been remedied. In November 1992, Los Angeles voters approved a bond issue for a new police communications system. Riordan's budgets were generous to the LAPD, and the city benefited from a federal crime bill that provided money to hire more police officers. The mayor also formed a private foundation to buy additional equipment for the department.

Nonetheless, Riordan and Williams were soon as much at odds as Bradley and Gates. The mayor viewed Williams as an ineffective manager, while the chief complained that Riordan wanted to hire police officers faster than the LAPD could absorb them.

Meanwhile, LAPD morale plummeted. After the riots, federal authorities prosecuted the four acquitted LAPD officers on civil rights charges, convicting two of them. The prosecutions were resented by many rank-and-file officers, who increasingly avoided confrontations they might once have welcomed. "An officer can go down an alley where the gangsters hang out or he can go down a main street where nothing is happening," LAPD Sergeant Tim Day told the *Los Angeles Times*. "Why would you choose to go down the alley when the public doesn't seem to support you for your efforts?"

In its heyday the LAPD had prided itself on "pro-active policing," which often meant collaring suspects before they actually committed a crime. This changed after the King case and the riots. Arrests dropped precipitously, and many officers took early retirement or quit the LAPD for other departments. To the dismay of their supervisors, LAPD officers often left their batons in their patrol cars instead of risking an accusation of using excessive force. But officers soon had another weapon to use against resistant suspects. They were issued canisters of a cayenne pepper gas spray known as oleoresin capsicum and called "OC," an alternative endorsed by Williams and approved by the City Council in 1993.

The most fundamental change within the LAPD was a shift toward community-based policing, which has a modern ring but is as old as police work. Sir Robert Peel, who formed the London Metropolitan Police in 1829, believed that crime prevention was the principal duty of the police and required citizen participation. He formulated a classic definition of community policing: "The police are the public, and the public are the police."

Community-based policing became a mantra for Williams, who often sounded as if he had invented it. But it had been tried in Los Angeles under former Chief Ed Davis in the 1970s. Davis was known for his provocative statements ("Hang them at the airport," he said of airplane hijackers), but his approach to police work was professional and progressive. He realized that the department was not blameless for the LAPD's low repute among minorities. Davis adapted community policing ideas used on foot beats in the East to Los Angeles, where the size and sprawl of the city required car patrols. He tried out his plan in Watts, then expanded it citywide.

Community policing was killed after Davis left in 1978 by an odd alliance between Bradley, a former police officer who feared the political power of the police, and Gates, then a new chief who was willing to appease traditional cops who

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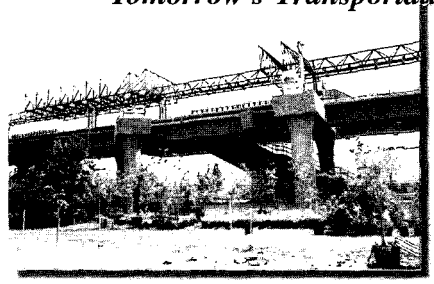

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Katherine Mader

looked upon community policing as "social work." But it is doubtful if community policing would have survived anyway in the face of the post-Proposition 13 budget cuts, for such a system requires extra officers, which the LAPD lacked.

The expansion of the LAPD under Riordan gave community policing new life, even though the mayor underestimated the losses due to attrition and succeeded in adding only 2,000 new officers instead of the 3,000 he had promised. Community advisory boards have been established in each of the city's 18 police divisions, co-chaired by an LAPD captain and a civilian, to establish priorities for police attention.

Williams, meanwhile, succeeded in his campaign to boost the public approval ratings of the LAPD but failed to win the respect of the department. Racial resentment may have contributed to his problems with the LAPD old guard, but it is doubtful if a white outsider who followed the same course would have fared any better. Williams' central problem, as veteran LAPD Captain Tim McBride observed, was that he failed to understand the "cultural difference" between Eastern police departments and the LAPD. Under rules established by Parker and continued by his successors, LAPD officers are taught never to accept favors from anyone, even a free meal. A Police Commission investigation of Williams in 1995, triggered by a complaint from a disgruntled former LAPD officer, found that Williams had received free meals and accommodations from a Las Vegas hotel-casino where he and his wife played slot machines.

After first denying the charge, Williams minimized it by saying that he had received standard "comps" that would have been given any guests on the basis of gambling play. The City Council rejected the Police Commission's effort to reprimand Williams, but the chief never recovered from the controversy. Rank-and-file officers thought Williams had lied, an offense for which they would have been suspended or disciplined. They were also outraged when Williams violated an unwritten rule by failing to return from Las Vegas for the funeral of a motorcycle officer killed in the line of duty. Meanwhile, Williams was faulted by the Police Commission and outside studies for alleged managerial lapses and failure to implement a number of Christopher Commission recommendations.

In March, the Police Commission decided unanimously not to give Williams the second five-year term he had requested. In May, the commission named Deputy Chief Bayan Lewis as interim chief and began the process of selecting a new chief. Lewis is not a candidate. The commission will submit three names to the mayor, who will choose from among them. If all goes well, the LAPD could have a new chief by Labor Day. While there are several applicants, most insiders believe Riordan's choice will come down to two veteran LAPD deputy chiefs — Mark Kroeker or Bernard Parks. Either would almost certainly be more popular with the public than Gates was in his final years and have more backing within the department than Williams.

But the choice poses a political problem for Riordan. Shortly before he was re-elected in April, the mayor met privately with a group of influential African-American supporters, including U.S. Representative Julian Dixon and Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke. At this meeting Riordan praised Parks, an African-American, and said he would make an outstanding chief. Sources close to the mayor have suggested that Riordan remains supportive of Parks. Riordan has strained relations with Blacks, the only group that voted against him when he was re-elected. They will become worse if Parks is not appointed.

Kroeker, who is white, has the backing of the Los Angeles Police Protective League, the influential police union, which has often been a mainstay of support for Riordan on police issues. Based on his record, he is more committed to community policing than Parks, a strict disciplinarian. Parks' commitment to discipline is widely believed to be one of the reasons that the police union opposes him.

Whoever takes over the LAPD will direct a different force than the one over which Gates presided at the time of the Rodney King incident. The new blue line is not quite as thin, and it has more minorities and women in its ranks. It is less confrontational (which some attribute to the increase in women), and possesses a more modern arsenal that includes non-lethal projectiles as well as pepper spray. Because of the vigilance of the strengthened Police Commission, it has less of a free hand than in the past. The LAPD also has the attention of an inspector-general, Katherine Mader, who has been credited for addressing issues of discrimination within the department.

But although crime rates have decreased in Los Angeles, as elsewhere, violent gang activity is commonplace and police work is as dangerous as ever. The thoughtful Bayan Lewis observes that poverty and ethnic tensions prevail in poor neighborhoods and that the potential loss of welfare benefits for immigrants will have a horrendous impact in Los Angeles.

"We [the LAPD] have tried to listen to the community, but that does not address the socioeconomic conditions prevailing there — the poverty and the lack of jobs and rebuilding," said Lewis. "What I see are lots of promises made after the riots, an initial burst of effort, and some inflow of money and improvement of skills. Now, five years later, it's gone."

Forty years ago, Chief Parker said that "the future of America may well rest in the hands of the police." Now, in a new era, the LAPD has learned that the future may reside in the teeming, multi-cultural communities that are changing the face of Los Angeles and the nation. No matter who becomes police chief, it is a lesson that the riot-scarred LAPD is unlikely to forget.

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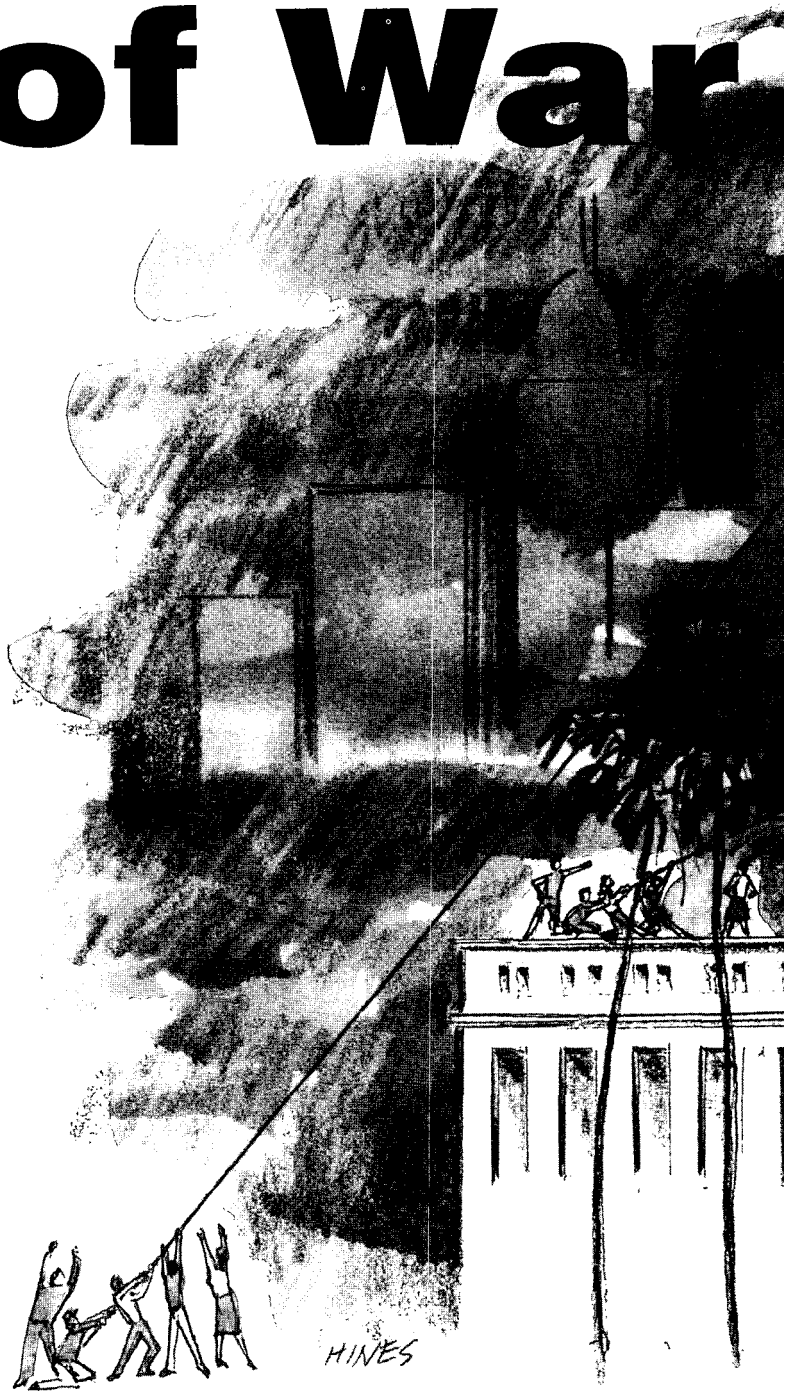
Tug of War

Shifting demographic sands will profoundly affect California politics and government in the 21st century. But the future is now in the city of Los Angeles which, for the moment, is the ground on which the new political equations are being battle-tested.

by Sherry Bebitch Jeffe



A conversation on the Moscow Metro with one of that city's new "have-nots" rings in my ears. An older woman, "retired" after 40 years as a doctor, wistfully responds to the mention of our home town: "You have a good life in Los Angeles."

Sometimes, to understand a place and its politics, you need to get as far away from them as you can.

The distance between Moscow and Los Angeles can be measured in light years — geographically, politically and culturally. Certainly Los

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Sherry Bebitch Jeffe teaches at the Claremont Graduate School and is a contributing editor to California Journal.

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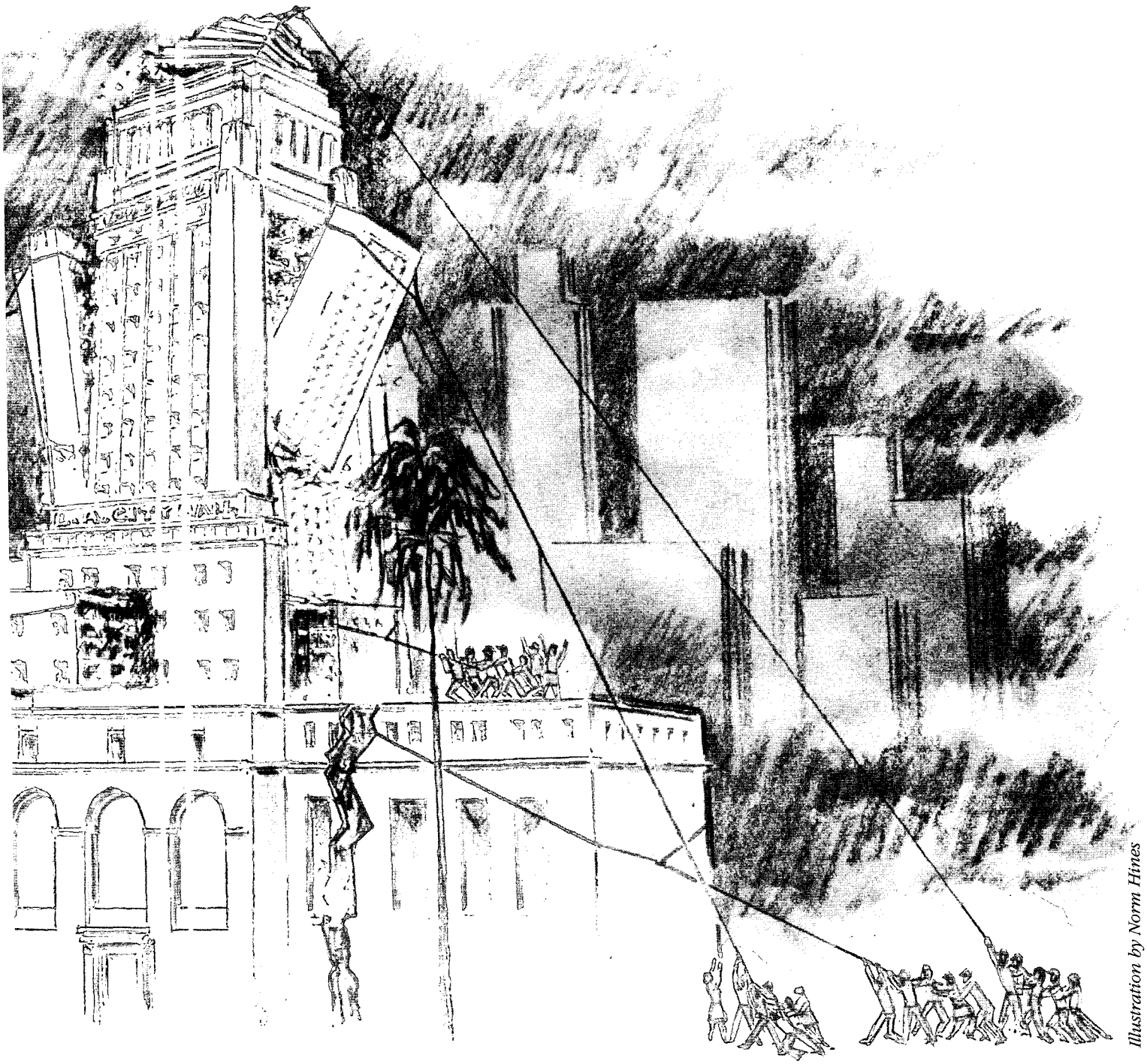

Illustration by Norm Hines

Angeles doesn't suffer Moscow's high levels of crime and corruption. But these cities share a common political challenge: Los Angeles — hobbled by creaky and outdated democratic institutions — and Moscow — haltingly building new ones — are struggling to reinvent themselves. Both are confronted with crises of representation and alienation. Both are plagued by a yawning gap between the "haves" and "have-nots."

In April, Angelenos re-elected Mayor Richard Riordan for a second and — because of local term limits — last term in office; in the normally nonpartisan race, Republican Riordan got 61 percent of the vote. (That didn't quite match the 97 percent garnered by Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov. But then Riordan had some competition from Democratic state Senator Tom Hayden.)

Ask savvy City Hall observers what they think the political future of Los Angeles will look like, and they'll tell you it will look a lot like Richard Riordan. At the very least, the direction L.A. governance will take into the next century will bear his strong imprint. How can a rich, white, Republican businessman define the political future of a racially diverse, less-well-off, predominantly Democratic city? In the words of a veteran City Hall watcher, "Everything big in town is happening around Riordan."

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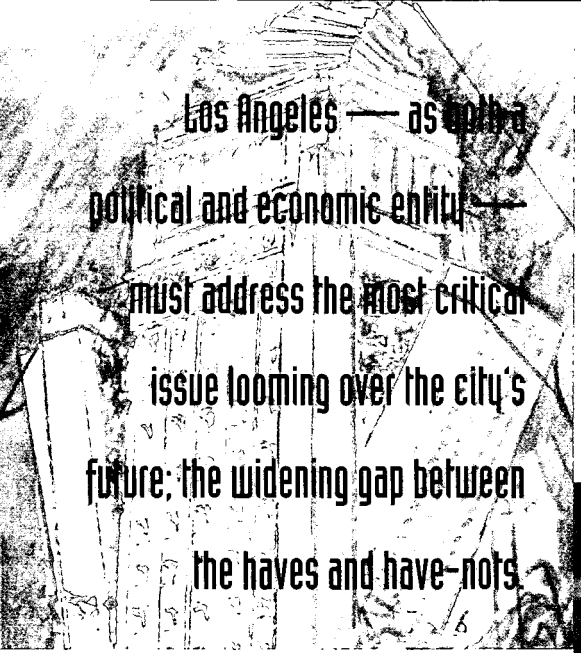

Los Angeles — as both a political and economic entity — must address the most critical issue looming over the city's future: the widening gap between the haves and have-nots.

Riordan is the driving force behind the current preoccupation with charter reform. The movement to restructure the city's outdated system of government was fueled by the San Fernando Valley secession boomlet — itself a manifestation of voters' anti-tax and anti-big government sentiment. Alarmed by the possibility of losing this economically and politically important part of L.A., local officials aimed to appease disgruntled Valleyites by embracing a proposal to establish a citizens' commission to rewrite the city's 72-year old charter. But the City Council, jealously guarding its predominance under the current "weak mayor" form of government, created a commission dominated by council appointments and subject to council veto of its recommendations.

Riordan, at political odds with the Council and frustrated in his attempts to move the city's bureaucracies, poured over half a million dollars of his own money to qualify an initiative to elect a charter commission with direct citizen control over reform; he raised $1.9 million overall to finance the proposal and to support his own slate of candidates for membership (presumably to facilitate a favorable hearing for "strong-mayor" reforms). In April, voters approved the mayor's proposal, but they refused to give his candidates a majority on the commission. While that puts into question Riordan's ability to control the outcome of the panel's deliberations, his actions have created an unavoidable mandate to confront failings in L.A.'s government institution.

The mayor is pushing to reshape the face — and the economy — of a hurting downtown. He has been a key player in the fight to develop a major sports complex and to complete the stalled Walt Disney Concert Hall. A slew of high-level vacancies has given Riordan the unprecedented opportunity to appoint — or have a primary role in selecting — the directors of nearly half the city's 33 administrative agencies and the powerful Metropolitan Transportation Authority, a troubled joint city-county agency (see story, page 34).

Riordan

Villaraigosa

Hayden

Among the posts to be filled are L.A's new chief of police, the director of the Department of Water and Power and the chief executive officer of the MTA. Putting these managers in place will allow Riordan to stamp his imprimatur on the long-term functioning of agencies which impact the everyday lives of Angelenos.

A self-described "doer, not a talker," Riordan is among a "new breed" of pragmatic, non-ideologically-bound mayors from both major parties who manage — as opposed to govern — large cities. "Their leadership," former housing secretary Henry Cisneros told the *Washington Post*, "has changed the way a city is governed."

Like New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, a fellow Republican, and Democratic Mayors Edward Rendell of Philadelphia and Richard M. Daley of Chicago, Riordan brings to his office a "results- oriented" approach to government — one that defies traditional urban, liberal shibboleths. Said Cisneros, "In the old days, a mayor had to speak to the symbols of the minority community and all the symbolic urban issues. These fellows have addressed issues like crime and jobs and business [development] in such common-sense ways that the critique for them not doing all the knee-jerk things evaporates."

For Riordan— and Los Angeles — that has translated into the emergence of a new electoral calculus in the city, based on changing demographics, pragmatic alliances and shifting political power. The mayor's winning coalition of Latinos and Anglo residents of the San Fernando Valley and Westside shattered the traditional alliance between African-Americans and liberal Democrats, primarily from the city's Westside, which dominated L.A's politics throughout most of the 1970s and '80s. In April, according to *Los Angeles Times* exit polling, the Mayor took 71 percent of the white vote, whereas Hayden got 75 percent of the black vote. Race has always been a part of politics — and life — in Los Angeles. But, despite the protestations of some African-American political leaders, Riordan's election does not signal the victory of the politics of racial division. Not when he drew 60 percent of Latino voters and 62 percent of Asians.

Riordan's election signals instead that, for Los Angeles African-Americans, demographic arithmetic is leading to the inevitable erosion of their political clout as growing numbers of Mexican and Latin-American immigrants become citizens and voters. Black turnout in the April election amounted to 13 percent of all voters; that is reflective of the percentage of African-Americans in the city's population. Latinos comprise nearly 40 percent of L.A.'s residents but have historically voted in much smaller

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numbers — about eight percent to 10 percent of the voters in a typical municipal election. This year, however, things changed. Latinos accounted for 15 percent of the vote in the April mayoral race — an historic high. For the first time, Latino voter participation in Los Angeles elections surpassed that of blacks. The true cost of this shift for African-Americans will be felt in the next reapportionment; they risk becoming marginalized in city politics as "black" electoral districts become increasingly "brown."

The black-Jewish coalition that once dominated L.A. politics was grounded in the civil rights movement; it had an ideological ballast. New alliances are more likely to be based on narrow economic issues; these coalitions will be far more fluid. And the political fallout? California Assembly Majority Leader Antonio Villaraigosa (D-Mt. Washington) observed, "I'm not sure everything breaks down between this ethnic group versus that ethnic group."

For example, The "Livable Wage Coalition," an alliance of labor unions and minority groups — including some of the mayor's political supporters — won this year's battle to enact a city minimum wage for some jobs. Riordan and the business community opposed the ordinance as unfriendly to business.

For many Angelenos, including Riordan, the debate over education in Los Angeles is no longer framed as a racial issue. Education has become an economic issue. The argument that upgrading L.A.'s schools is necessary to attract jobs to the city resonates with the parents of the district's overwhelmingly Latino population.

Early attempts to dismantle the gargantuan Los Angeles Unified School District were orchestrated mainly by disgruntled Anglos opposed to busing and out to sever the San Fernando Valley from inner-city schools. Efforts have been revived to split off the Valley from LAUSD, but they have raised the specter of re-segregation. A *Los Angeles Times* analysis showed "that a West Valley district — as well as a Westside district if one were to form — would become significantly more white than those schools are now."

But public mistrust of big government and frustration with an unproductive, unresponsive bureaucracy, have motivated break-away movements from the South Bay to the inner city. The new education mantra is "local control."

The emphasis on economic issues enhances the clout of the city's labor unions — particularly in a city where corporate domination of politics is largely a thing of the past. Former downtown powerhouses have been replaced by absentee landlords and foreign-owned corporations (a dicey political situation, given the current scrutiny of campaign contributions by Asian businesses). Unions have become energized by issues that directly affect them. They successfully backed a slate of candidates for the Charter Reform Commission to protect their stake in preserving civil service and in blocking privatization of city services.

Job issues are of particular concern to labor's growing constituency of minorities and less-skilled, lower-paid workers. That group's increasing political potency will mean Los Angeles — as both a political and economic entity — must address the most critical issue looming over the city's future; the widening gap between the haves and have-nots. What will that mean politically? Today, the Los Angeles electorate is not reflective of the city as a whole. Anglos constitute about 40 percent of the population, but this past April they were 65 percent of the electorate. Blacks and Latinos make up over a majority of the city's residents, but they accounted for less than a third of the electorate in April. It is the city's "haves" — largely Anglo, better off, more conservative — which determine elections and largely define the city's policy priorities.

How, then, will the city choose to deal with the impact of state and federal immigration and welfare reforms on Angelenos? What will happen in the minority communities of Central and South Los Angeles and parts of the San Fernando Valley — all identified in a recent University of Southern California study as among the most hard-hit?

As of now, the forum for debating Los Angeles' political future is the charter revision process. On June 4th, in a lackluster election in which only 12 percent of Los Angeles voters cast ballots, the makeup of the Charter Reform Commission approved by Angelenos in April was settled. Now the real work of reinventing governance in California's largest city must begin. It won't be easy; vested interests and entrenched institutions can't be expected to voluntarily surrender turf. Yet that is what real reform requires.

Where, then, is Los Angeles going? What prescriptions are there to fix what's broken? And what does that mean for the rest of California?

Times business columnist James Flanigan framed the challenge accurately. "Marrying decentralized initiative with central authority," he wrote, "will be the important task of charter reform." There will have to be created

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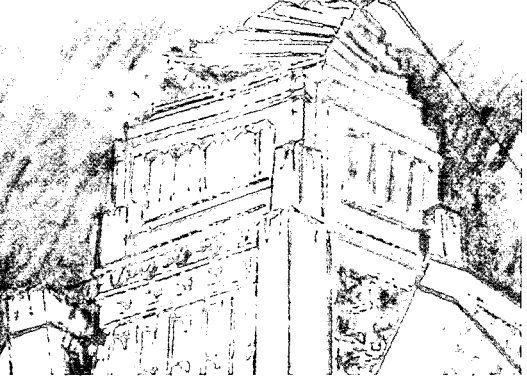

— by the mayor, the City Council, reformers or ordinary citizens — some centripetal political force strong enough to prevent the city from pulling apart — geographically and politically.

Yet "devolution" is the operative word. School break-up threats and secession movements have guaranteed that "small" will be looked upon as "beautiful" by reformers. Neighborhood councils are being touted to "empower" citizens and to bring government closer to them — although agreement as to what these councils ought to do and how much power they should have will likely tie reformers — and city council members unwilling to relinquish power over budget and policy priorities — up in knots.

Look for a flirtation with establishing a City Council whose membership is larger than the current 15. Will voters be willing to go along with giving even more politicians the opportunity to enter the arena? And the debate will continue over whether a more accountable government means a strong chief executive. What kind of leadership best serves a city still searching for its ethos? Riordan is the epitome of the mayor as "deal maker." For now, that appears to suit Los Angeles. Part of deal-making is coalition-building, and that will be an necessary skill for any future Los Angeles mayor.

Observers suggest that "the next Riordan may not be white." He or she may be a Latino who can — and must — move beyond what Villaraigosa labels "enclave politics." Villaraigosa, not an unlikely candidate, argues that L.A. has "no majority community any more." Therefore, "the real need is for coalition-builders who reach out across and bridge communities."

Among other potential candidates are L.A. County Supervisor Gloria Molina, City Councilman Richard Alarcon, whose San Fernando Valley district is majority Latino but whose electorate is 70 percent white, Assemblyman Tony Cardenas, who represents a similar Valley district, and Linda Griego, a Latina businesswoman and former aide to the city's first African-American mayor, Tom Bradley. Or, perhaps, Cisneros, the new president of Los Angeles-based Univision Communications, which runs the country's leading Spanish-language broadcast network.

What would the city's current chief executive want to tell Californians about L.A.'s political future? Said Mayor Riordan, "The rest of the state has to realize that as Los Angeles goes, the state goes."

The problems that face L.A. — alienation, balkanization, inequity, intolerance — also confront California. But the promise and opportunity this diverse, vibrant and evolving city holds are California's too. All that is required is money, leadership, participation and political will — and a commitment to the dynamism of LaLa Land and to the California Dream.

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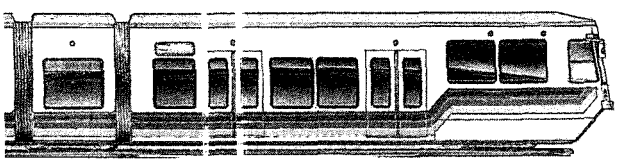

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The MTA:

Los Angeles' Transit Nightmare

Touted as the ultimate answer to L.A.'s daunting transportation woes, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority has descended into a seemingly bottomless money pit. Over budget, behind schedule, it is beset by shoddy workmanship, sinkholes, cronyism — and a deeply divided, highly politicized board of directors which critics say is the root of the problem.

By Sigrid Bathen

Shortly before noon last October 23rd, Arthur Sinai, inspector general of the troubled Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority, met in a closed session with the MTA board of directors — a contentious, unwieldy 13-member body (26, if 13 alternates are included) with bitter, longstanding political divisions. The board was to decide that day who would get a controversial, $65 million contract to supervise construction of the $1 billion Eastside subway tunnel. As Sinai and board members met in private, the board room was packed with waiting construction executives and the ever-present gaggle of transportation industry lobbyists. What

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Illustration by Anthony Strom

Sinai brought the board, however, brought the proceedings to a halt.

An affable, blunt-talking 57-year-old former IRS and U.S. Treasury agent with a long resume as an international Nazi-hunter and federal investigator, Sinai was hired by the newly created MTA board after a national search in 1993. His job: to supervise the MTA's independent investigatory arm. Since that time, he has conducted more than 100 investigations of allegations ranging from sloppy bookkeeping and shoddy construction to illegal kickbacks. As of December 1996, 47 investigations were actively open, and another 43 were completed last year.

Last fall, Sinai's office started looking at allegations of irregularities in the process leading to the choice of a firm to supervise the hugely lucrative and controversial Eastside tunnel. Three companies were in contention, and a panel of seven independent experts, which was paid $375,000, had recommended the contract go to a consortium called JMA. Bechtel Infrastructure Corporation was ranked second, and Metro East third. Despite federal threats to cut funding to the beleaguered agency, the board was expected to vote for the bidder with the lowest recommendation by the expert panel

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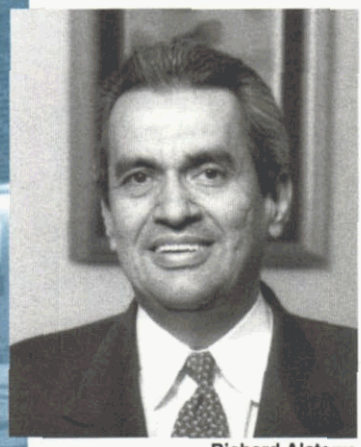
Civic Center Station, MTA Red Line. Photo courtesy of MTA



Richard Alatorre

— Metro East, also known as Metro East Consultants or MEC. The firm was strongly favored by influential City Councilman and MTA board member Richard Alatorre, a close ally of Mayor Richard Riordan. Riordan, who controls three board appointments (including Alatorre), takes over as MTA chairman this month.

The board's expected vote in favor of MEC was based on the controversial recommendation of then-MTA Chief Executive Joseph E. Drew, who said MEC had the technical expertise to do the complicated tunneling under some 250 homes and businesses, through soil conditions so treacherous that one expert likened the project to tunneling through the minefields of Bosnia. Drew, who resigned in January after less than a year on the job, had been second-in-command to Franklin White, the longtime former New York transportation commissioner who was hired by the MTA board in 1993 and almost immediately clashed with Alatorre and the mayor. White was fired — many say under highly questionable and politically charged circumstances — in 1995. The MTA has since been without a permanent CEO and is experiencing serious problems finding one to take on the troubled agency.

In a dramatic announcement that has shaken the already fragile MTA to its core — renewing federal threats to cut off funding, as well as prompting legislative proposals in Sacramento to radically alter the structure of the agency and its board — Sinai, his eyes bloodshot from lack of sleep, reportedly stood at the back of the room during the closed-door October 23rd board meeting while MTA attorney David Kelsey told the board that the inspector general was launching a criminal investigation into the Eastside contract process and the decision to override the expert panel's recommendation in favor of MEC. Board Chairman Larry Zarian then announced to the packed public meeting that the board was delaying its decision on the Eastside contract as a result of the inspector general's inquiry.

Although Sinai will not comment on details of the investigation, MTA sources told *The Los Angeles Times* that the 11th-hour action by the inspector general was in part prompted by a late-night phone call October 22nd from MTA construction staff director Michael Gonzales, who told Sinai that he had found documents that "scared the hell out of him." Sinai then met early Wednesday morning with Gonzales, his secretary and the agency's construction contracts administrator. No further details of the investigation have been released, and some board members and MTA staff are grumbling that it has cast a pall over the agency.

Alatorre, no fan of the inspector general, is pointedly critical of the probe. "What is this man doing for his money?" the former state legislator asked in a telephone interview. "There is no accountability. ...Nobody seems to know what he is doing."

Sinai, who reportedly was hired over Alatorre's choice for the job, responds that the investigation now involves the U.S. Justice Department, is confidential as ongoing investigations are and might be compromised if it were discussed. He said the inspector general is independent of the agency, "as it should be," and makes regular reports to the board.

Meanwhile, battered on several fronts, the MTA has also been asked to submit all documents relating to the contract decision — including notes, audio and videotapes — to congressional investigators from the U.S. Senate looking into possible funding irregularities at the agency, which has received huge sums of federal transit funds — roughly half of the total cost — for construction of the controversial $5.9 billion subway project.

"The latest Metro Rail subway mess doesn't involve a tunnel collapse," wrote veteran *Times* political reporter Bill Boyarsky four days after the board delayed its decision on the Eastside contract. "It's a governmental collapse, the result of incestuous political relationships and old-fashioned patronage." Blaming Alatorre and his close political ally, Riordan, whom he called the MTA's "two most powerful board members," Boyarsky said Alatorre "has burrowed deep into the MTA bureaucracy, placing friends, former aides and associates into jobs big and small."

As for Riordan, Boyarsky wrote, he "has none of Alatorre's political skill. Nor does he have the interest in

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detail that enabled Alatorre to penetrate the farthest reaches of the MTA. But, like Alatorre, Riordan understands power [and] quickly learned that Alatorre has it."

Arthur Sinai

Alatorre, no fan of the *Los Angeles Times*, says media coverage of the Eastside controversy has been unfair and unduly negative. "I've been in this business for 25 years, and I'm a big boy," he said. "I don't try to fight battles over and over again, but there is a question of fairness." He defends Metro East and says a lawsuit filed by MEC against the MTA "will demonstrate how unfair and manipulative" the selection process was. "The Eastside line is a line that the day it opens will probably have more usage than all the lines right now," he added. "I fought for it from the beginning, and I'll continue to fight for it."

In January, the board voted 8-1, with Alatorre the sole dissenting vote and Riordan abstaining, to award the contract to supervise construction of the Eastside line to JMA. Thus far, the completed portion of the L.A. subway system stretches 6.5 miles, costing approximately $1.6 billion and running from Union Station downtown to Wilshire Boulevard and Western Avenue. Weekday ridership is estimated at 35,000.

Created in 1993 through a merger of the Southern California Rapid Transit District and the L.A. County Transportation Commission, the MTA is responsible for the one of the largest regional transit systems in the country — a maze of light and heavy rail lines and a fleet of 1,800 buses. It is a system fraught with inherent complications — vastly more complex than other metropolitan areas with less long-term dependence on the automobile as the principal mode of transportation.

Low-income residents who rely on the buses say the bus system has taken a back seat to the more politically sexy — and much more expensive — subway and rail system, and bus riders recently staged an angry demonstration at an MTA board meeting to protest what they say is a gross imbalance in the system. Among its many legal problems, the MTA is under court order to improve its bus system. It also faces more than 1,000 lawsuits by businesses and homeowners in the path of the subway, recently had to pay out $12.3 million to three welders severely burned in a tunnel explosion three years ago, and faces questions surrounding the recent death of a tunnel worker in a gruesome construction accident. And the agency is still dogged by the legal and political fallout from the 1995 collapse of portions of Hollywood Boulevard — later attributed to the use of wooden, rather than steel, supports in the underground tunnel.

Some of the MTA's problems can be traced to the peculiar nature of L.A. transportation policy, if a policy can be found in the evolution of the frequently gridlocked, concrete and asphalt maze that blankets the 4,058-square-mile region — and to the unusual and difficult soil conditions through which L.A. subway tunnels must be dug. Subway tunneling projects are never easy, often fraught with cost overruns and construction failures, but in L.A. they are particularly daunting, requiring treacherous tunneling under established neighborhoods and businesses.

Tunnel boring machine during construction. Photo courtesy of MTA

"Try to imagine building a subway today in New York," offers one transportation expert. If L.A. had started earlier — decades earlier — to staunch its dependence on car and freeway, those experts say, the MTA might not be in quite the mess it is today.

"If you were born in L.A., as I was, you never expected transportation to be good," says former Assemblyman Richard Katz (D-Sylmar), who headed the Assembly Transportation Committee for a decade and wrote the legislation that created the MTA. "I live in the northeast San Fernando Valley, and I'm glad when it only takes me an hour to get downtown."

Nonetheless, Katz adds, cars and freeways are quite literally strangling the megalopolis, destroying the air, making citizens prisoners of their cars. As the acknowledged "father of the MTA," Katz is palpably angry about its troubled and widely publicized infancy. And, like many other critics of the MTA — some, like Katz, with past political axes to grind — Katz places responsibility squarely at the feet of the board and most particularly Riordan, against whom he unsuccessfully made a run for mayor. In some ways, he says, the mayor's leadership role is predetermined by the peculiar nature of L.A. politics.

"In most cities, the mayor dominates by structure or by force of personality," said Katz. "In L.A., even if you had a mayor with a personality, you'd have to get past Michael Ovitz taking off with $90 million. This is a city where more people can tell you what the number-one-grossing movie is, but not who the mayor is. And we like it that way. This city plays interest group politics like no city I've ever seen."

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Worker installing concrete tunnel linings. Photo courtesy of MTA

Without strong leadership from the mayor and the board, which also includes all five of Los Angeles' powerful county supervisors, Katz and others say, the MTA will remain torn by political expediency and intense pressure from the various interest groups hovering around the agency and its potentially lucrative contracts. At one point, 110 lobbyists were registered as representing the three bidders for the Eastside project, according to the *Times,* outnumbering board members by about eight to one.

"If you don't have the leadership, the problems continue," says Katz. "The mayor was set up [in the legislation] to be the dominant force because he controls four votes. But Riordan has refused to take the initiative. His focus is on subways at the expense of buses, and we cannot afford to build subways all over Southern California. The cost is too high; Washington doesn't have the money, and the locals don't have the money. ...There are a lot of construction companies getting rich off the MTA, but it has wasted a whole lot of taxpayer money."

Lately, Riordan appears to be distancing himself from the problems of the subway, saying publicly that more emphasis should be placed on the bus system. During the May 28th bus riders' demonstration at the MTA board meeting, Riordan pushed for a vote to purchase 200 buses and pledged to support the purchase of 223 more. Despite Riordan's generally influential role on the board, it delayed the vote in order to study how the bus purchase might impact rail construction. Expressing unusual public frustration, Riordan said he felt like "a juggler who just learned to juggle three balls and then is given two more balls."

Deputy Mayor Steve Sugerman says Riordan's much-touted alliance with Alatorre is sometimes exaggerated and that they often differ on issues. "Richard is a very independent vote," says Sugerman. Riordan's efforts to clean up the MTA include a legislative proposal to reduce the size of the board and a push to better balance the needs of bus versus rail. But his main concern is to find a new CEO, and Riordan was bitterly disappointed when his choice for the position — Bechtel executive Theodore Weigle Jr. — turned down the job in May after weeks of negotiations and a salary offer ($200,000 annually plus benefits) that was higher than any other transit chief in the business. "We have an agency that is out of control," said Riordan. "We desperately need a new CEO as soon as possible to shake up the agency."

In Sacramento, legislative solutions to the problems of the MTA focus on reducing the size of the unwieldy and contentious board, with its 13 "principals" and 13 alternates, who can sit in and vote for their principals, have been known to disagree with them, sometimes vociferously, and who must in any case be fully briefed by MTA staff — an administrative nightmare for an agency already crippled by staff resignations and poor morale. Interim MTA chief executive Linda Bohlinger, a longtime MTA and California Transportation Commission executive who succeeded Drew in January, says the board is in singular agreement on eliminating the alternates — "as a start, perhaps as a finish," in efforts to improve the agency and reassure funding sources, mainly the federal government, that the place does not function in total chaos.

Other legislative proposals include measures to reduce the influence of prominent political figures with constituencies to serve and powerful supporters, some of them in the construction industry, to keep happy. MTA critics say a better system would be a largely appointed board, but others aren't so sure. "I think elected officials can still serve on the board and do a good job," says Bohlinger. "Most states have elected officials on their boards. We have the most complex and challenging situation of just about any city. The advantage of having elected officials on the board is that they represent constituencies in L.A., and their votes on the MTA board serve those citizens."

Although board members generally favor eliminating the alternates, they are less inclined to reduce the number of elected officials on the board. "The MTA was structured as it was to see that [board members] are accountable," says Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, a former state legislator and congresswoman widely regarded as one of the more temperate voices on the volatile MTA board. "I think it's a mistake to have an appointed board. If you're trying to avoid the impact of the political, an appointed board makes no difference." She says appointed members are even more likely to be beholden to the appointing authority, less accountable to the public than elected officials.

Some critics have gone so far as to suggest the MTA be placed in receivership. Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, who is frequently at odds with Alatorre on the MTA board, said in

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a recent television interview that he is "very close to suggesting that the MTA put itself into receivership and let the governor take it over, or the state Department of Transportation, and run it. We can't run this agency the way it's going now. It's too factionalized. It's too corrupt. It's too out of touch with public scrutiny. Strange things are happening, and the public is not being well-served. If we can't clean up our act on our own, then we ought to give it up and let somebody who can run it, run it."

Asked if criminal corruption was a "possibility" at the highest levels of the MTA, Yaroslavsky said: "I think it is very possible."

Sources close to the investigation, who asked for anonymity, say the inspector general's investigation focuses on "ethical and criminal acts." Earlier IG investigations focused heavily on accounting, contracting and procurement practices and resulted in the indictments of two MTA officials and an insurance executive for bribery and fraud. Abdoul Sesay, the former MTA risk manager, was sentenced last February to 14 months in federal prison for accepting illegal kickbacks, and John McAllister, an insurance consultant who paid the bribes, was convicted of bribery last year. The acting controller of the MTA was terminated in 1996 and later indicted by a federal grand jury on 29 felony counts of fraud.

In his annual report last December, Sinai said the office is "now realizing the results" of investigations begun one to three years earlier. "The results achieved so far reinforce the message that the MTA will not be an easy target for fraud, abuse and other illegal activities," he said, "and that wrongdoers will be investigated and prosecuted to the full extent of the law." Although MTA officials say accounting practices have been tightened as a result of earlier inspector general investigations, other sources say the agency is far from purified.

Always, the criticism returns to some board members and their influence on the contracting process. "It is a very competitive board," said one source close to the investigation. "There are different projects, different needs. They [board members] want to deliver contracts to their friends and associates. It's a very highly charged political atmosphere, and early on they had a 20- or 30-year plan based on all kinds of assumptions that you can give everybody what they want and there will be endless funding." Likening the back-room dealings of the MTA to the political corruption portrayed in the movie "Chinatown," that source attributed alleged MTA corruption in part to "a certain culture" unique to L.A. politics and to the transportation industry, with its potentially lucrative, long-range government money pots.

"People in the transportation industry get bounced around," said that source. "If you're in a location where you're going to be doing major construction, you have a marriage of the entities that want to get the money for construction and the industry that wants to do the job. You have all kinds of clout on the private and public side trying to get the money."

That source and other confidential sources close to the MTA said the key to the controversy is fairly elementary in political circles of any kind: the lure of big money. "The difficulty for individual members [of the MTA board] is in seeing huge sums of money being spent," said one knowledgeable source. "That's the key, the huge sums of money, and their [board members'] inability to make decisions in the interest of the entire community and not just their district. The well-being of the community collapses entirely with that board. ...The board is out of control and dominates the executive, to the exclusion of serious managerial engagement, which is what those folks [staff managers] are trained to do."

Several sources said agency security on potentially lucrative contracts has historically been something of a sieve — with information on contracts often leaked before work on the contracts themselves was completed within the agency, prompting a flurry of activity among lobbyists bringing pressure on board members for potential contracts. "In general, myriad firms curry favor with board members," said one source, echoing many others in and around the MTA. "And, the people putting together the [engineering and construction] teams or consortiums use politically connected subcontractors. ...Richard Alatorre is most identified with [the subcontractors]. He is not viewed as the only, but by far the superstar of how that game is played."

The role of lobbyists for potential contractors is particularly troubling to critics of the MTA. "This is true certainly of most state capitals," said one source knowledgeable about transportation issues in California and other states. "If you compare this MTA to others in major cities, there is greater industry impact and greater lobbying impact than I think is common anywhere else. For the life of me, I've not figured out why it's so strong in Los Angeles."

Tunnel breakthrough, Red Line subway. Photo courtesy of MTA

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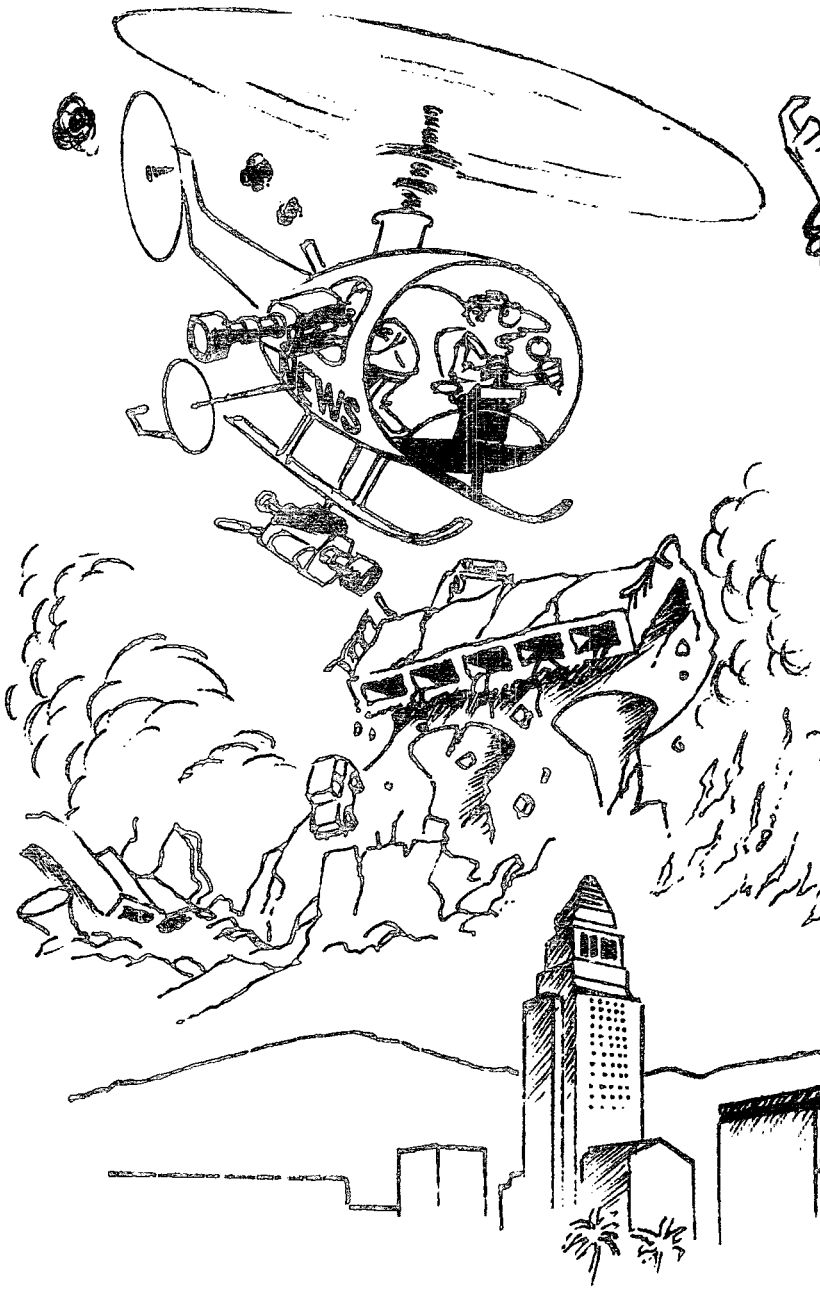
The media covers

Coverage of politics and civic affairs is dwarfed in a city where celebrity murder trials assume cosmic proportions and where the significance of the Academy Awards rivals that of earthquakes and urban riots. But, could it be otherwise in LA?



By Susan Rasky

Pick your favorite Los Angeles media cliche: fire, flood, earthquake, urban riot, celebrity murder trial or perhaps the more generic police shoot-out with fleeing suspect as seen from overhead helicopter. In a town where cataclysm and caricature, fact and fantasy, blend so easily with the natural order of things, who's to say what is sensationalism and what is news?

"Town," of course, is itself dramatic license, a patently absurd description — even 40 years ago — for the atomized

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Contributing Editor Susan Rasky teaches journalism at the University of California, Berkeley.

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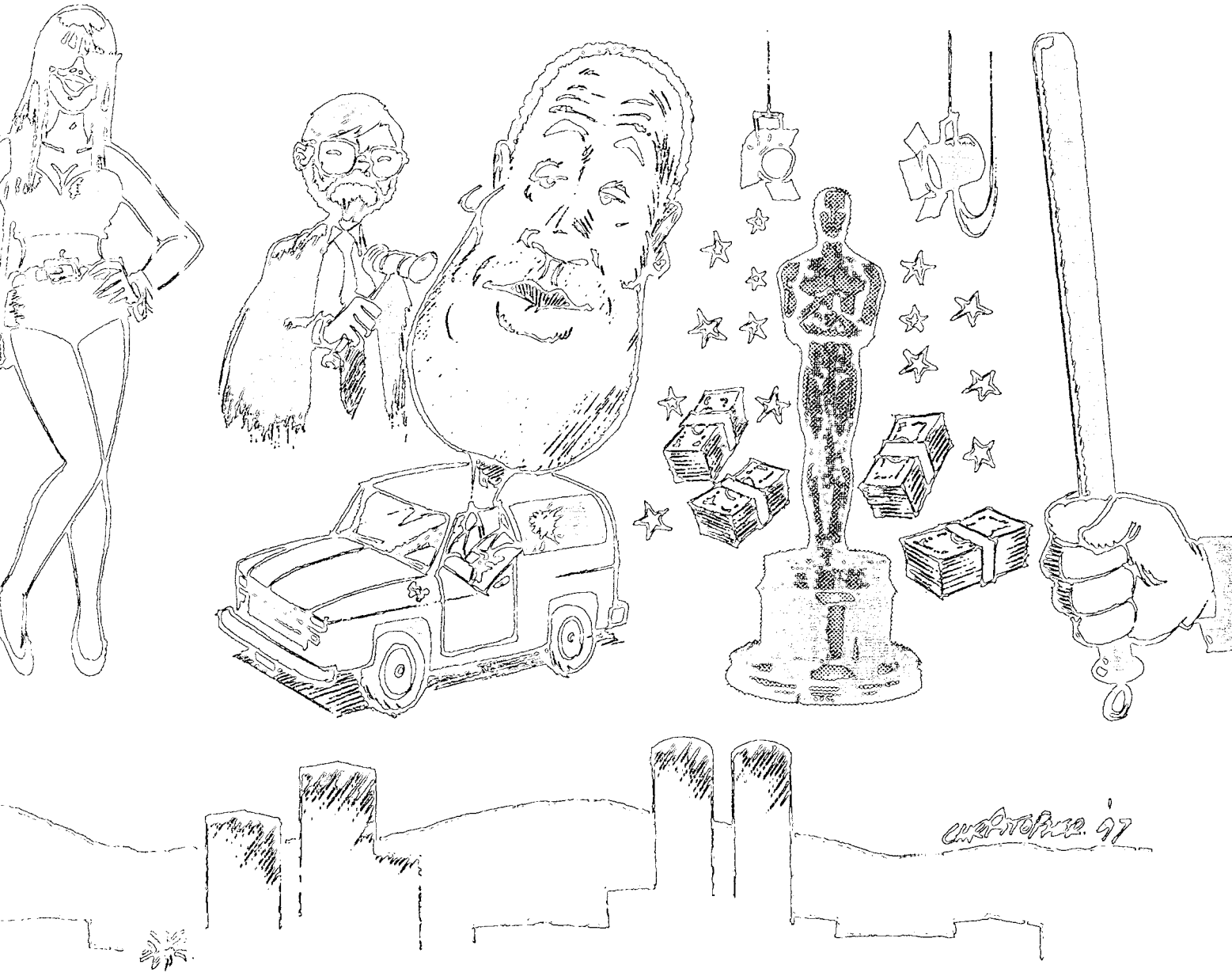
Los Angeles



suburbs and fragmented subcultures that happen to lie within the geographic and political boundaries denoting the city of Los Angeles or surrounding Los Angeles County. In the mass-market terms that matter to advertisers, Greater Los Angeles is 9.74 million radio listeners dividing attention among 81 stations, 12 of which broadcast in Spanish. It is five million "TV households" served by 10 commercial channels (two of them Spanish language) in a "designated market area" that covers Los Angeles County, all of Orange, San Bernardino and Ventura counties as well as pieces of Kern, Riverside and San Diego counties.

"What you're talking about is delivering TV households," says Jean Brooks, a vice president at the international media buying firm, Carat ICG. "In the world of media, L.A. is God."

Diety status is no comfort to L.A.'s media critics and politicos. They see only further evidence of dystopia in the fact that local television newscasts devoted more attention to violent crime and Liz Taylor's brain surgery than to the recent mayoral and school bond campaigns. On some level, the news judgment seems rational enough and not so different from what it would have been in other big city markets. Hollywood, and by extension Hollywood-style live-action crime coverage, sells. Civics, particularly civics pertaining to a jurisdiction in which many viewers are not residing, doesn't.

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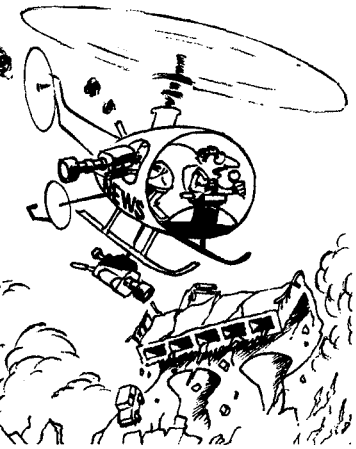

The hardest part is finding political or other public figures whose names all readers will recognize. It's one of the reasons I write more than I otherwise would about our sports arenas.

— Bill Boyarsky

The infinitely more interesting angle on LA television news is that the leading Spanish-language station in the country, Los Angeles-based Univision network's KMEX Channel 34, boasts higher ratings for its 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. newscasts than does the English language competition. Furthermore, since January, those newscasts have been carrying English subtitles. A recent cover story on Hispanic media in the weekly alternative paper, *New Times Los Angeles*, quoted a KMEX spokeswoman who explained that the station decided to add the subtitles after Anglos began calling to say they wanted to know what was going on.

Lest the civic-minded rejoice prematurely, the spokeswoman also told *New Times* that the station is now getting calls asking for English subtitles on its telenovelas, the wildly popular Mexican and Latin American soap operas.

In the world of print, God's market is dominated by the *Los Angeles Times*, flagship of the Times Mirror Company. For the better part of its 116-year existence, the paper has attempted to stamp an identity on the centerless city and region it covers, while simultaneously trying to figure out its own identity. Early on, that amounted to stamping out the competition and serving the economic and right-wing political interests of its founders, Harrison Gray Otis and his son-in-law, Harry Chandler, who together formed Times Mirror in 1884.

The modern *Los Angeles Times* really dates from 1960, when Otis Chandler, Harry's grandson, became publisher and began to curb the paper's ideological excesses and transform it into a professional, world-class news organization. In the early 1970s, it became the first of the country's major metropolitan newspapers to define itself as a sort of daily news magazine — the better, it was thought, to compete against TV's headline-driven news and the better to capture far flung readers with zoned regional editions. These editions and the *Times* executives assigned to oversee them have had decidedly mixed results, paricularly in Orange County, where, as urban theorist and author Mike Davis has observed, "the *Orange County Register* buried a whole generation of the Chandlers' best and brightest."

Besides, Angelenos never seem to have been fully pleased with the transformation or the subsequent adaptations. Alternately they bash the paper for a failure to live up to the perceived sophistication and gravitas of *The New York Times* or, on the other hand, for adopting East Coast airs and assiduously cultivating a Yuppie readership, while losing touch with the city's multi-ethnic population and losing ground in its ever-expanding suburbs.

To veteran *Times* writer and now columnist, Bill Boyarsky, that sort of criticism is not only too facile, but also misses the point about L.A.'s changing demographics. During the decade between 1978 and 1989, when he served as city/county bureau chief, and in his regular city column, "The Spin," Boyarsky, perhaps more than any other *Times* staffer, has attempted to bring the issues and voices of the poor to readers. The column, he says, is a way of trying to look for common denominators in a city that often forgets it has any.

"This area is too complex and not compact enough to define the way Herb Caen defined San Francisco in his column, and frankly, even his San Francisco was long gone," Boyarsky says. "I try to define slices, and at the end of the year, I hope the body of work adds up to define the city overall. I write about public education, about violence and what people are doing about it. The hardest part is finding political or other public figures whose names all readers will recognize. It's one of the reasons I write more than I otherwise would about our sports arenas."

As for increasing circulation among the L.A. County's 40 percent Latino population, "It is and has been a problem," Boyarsky says, "but to look at it in Marxian class terms is wrong. The people we are writing about are striving to be middle class, a very American thing. The challenge is to reach out to them in terms of what they are becoming. The suburbanization of the Latino middle class, that is the story."

Monica Lozano, associate publisher and executive editor of Southern Caifornia's only Spanish language daily, *La Opinion*, agrees in part. But she argues that even middle class Latinos turn to the paper her grandfather launched in 1926 (since 1990 it has been 50 percent owned by Times Mirror) because, like the KMEX newscasts, it provides a perspective and policy emphasis lacking in other media, including the *Times*.

"We have a very good sense of how to translate issues so people can understand and participate in civic life," Lozano says. "Our job is to educate, not just inform. Everybody else is busy talking about civic journalism, well, we've been doing it for years."

The paper has an audited circulation of nearly 104,000, but Lozano estimates its actual readership at something closer to half a million. Those readers, she says, fall into two broad categories. "About 50 percent came to the United States 12 to 20 years ago; they have kids born and educated here, and they own their own homes. They are bilingual, but they prefer to read Spanish and they like the content they can't get elsewhere." The other 50 percent, she says, are more recent immigrants with limited English proficiency who are reading the paper for news of their native countries and the classified sections.

News from home is also an important selling point for the *Korea Times*, a national Korean language daily that provides its 50,000 Los Angeles readers with both a locally published section covering community news and a full insert of the version published each day in Korea. "Our focus is older readers," says city editor Yoon Cho, who oversees a 40-person bureau in Los Angeles. "Our primary concern is educating the immigrants, introducing them to the mainstream. Right now, the hottest issue in the Korean community is welfare reform, the cut-off of benefits to legal

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immigrants. What we tell them is prepare for citizenship."

The African-American print media in Los Angeles, like its ethnic counterparts, is partly a neighborhood press of freebie weekly shoppers and high school varsity scores and partly the *Los Angeles Sentinel* — a voice of moral authority. But the weekly paper, which began publishing in 1933, is not where younger African-Americans go for their news or commentary. They seek out radio. As an aide to one LA-based African-American politician put it, "the *Sentinel's* endorsements are still the ones taken into the voting booth, but the black votership, which is to say the black middle class, reads the [*Los Angeles*] *Times*."

As L.A.'s inner city gives way to newer, working class Asian and Latino immigrants, increasing numbers of African-Americans have moved across the Hollywood Hills to the San Fernando Valley, home to one of the *Times'* more fiesty competitors, the *Daily News*. A lineal descendant of the old *Valley Greensheet*, it combines a local news sensibility with the sort of aggressive edge on politics and political institutions that the *Times* frequently lacks. Often it breaks pieces of important stories that fly under the larger paper's radar only to find itself outgunned several days or weeks later when the giant on Spring Street deploys its superior resources to turn those pieces into major news.

"We made a conscious decision that we can't compete with the *Times* on national and international news, so we concentrate on local news," says Rick Orlov, the paper's long-time political writer and weekly political columnist. "The new residents of the Valley are looking for better schools, better jobs, better housing, the same thing that drove people from Oklahoma here 60 years ago. Those are the issues we write about and we're not afraid to go after the downtown establishment. It's easy for the *LA Times* to editorialize about Bosnia and Clinton, but let them take on the city council or Mayor [Richard] Riordan."

For years, there has been talk that the *Daily News* will "come over the hill" to challenge the *Times* on its own turf. That seems less likely in the near term given the death earlier this year of the paper's owner, Jack Kent Cooke. The Singleton chain, which owns competing papers in the San Gabriel Valley, has reportedly expressed an interest in a purchase, and the *Daily News* publisher, Larry Beasley, is said to be sounding out a group of private investors.

The rivalry between the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Daily News* is positively tame compared to the battles for readers and ad dollars underway on what might be called the hip and chic fronts of the L.A. market. The first is the war of the alternative weeklies, which pits a granddaddy of the genre, the *LA Weekly*, against the year-old *New Times Los Angeles*, owned by the Phoenix-based New Times chain. The chain has said it is prepared to run the paper at a loss for five years to gain a foothold in the city. The second involves what may be a fight to the death between *LA Magazine*, at 35 the nation's oldest city magazine, and the upstart *Buzz*, which has been around since 1990.

For readers who look to the alternative weeklies for more than entertainment listings and singles ads, the competetion between the leftish *LA Weekly* and the fervently non-aligned *New Times* is probably a plus. Both papers take political and social issue coverage seriously and to some extent, both see their roles as prodding the *Times* on investigative and institutional stories. "People here are hungry for good journalism that shows them how their city

The rivalry between the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Daily News* is positively tame compared to the battles for readers and ad dollars underway on what might be called the hip and chic fronts of the L.A. market.

really works," says *New Times* managing editor Jack Cheevers, a former *Times* reporter. "I want the newspaper to be a great teacher. Maybe that's impossible in a city like L.A., or any city, but I still think you can make money by doing good journalism."

The battle between *LA Magazine* and *Buzz*, both of which have been in editorial turmoil and both of which have been losing money, suggests this is probably not the case, even when it comes to selling glitz. While neither could be called beacons of quality journalism, *Buzz* in particular has cultivated a certain stylish edge and a stable of talented writers. *LA Magazine*, which has been owned by the Walt Disney Company since 1995, was put under the control of Disney's Fairchild Publications earlier this year. Fairchild specializes in fashion magazines.

Buzz publisher Mark Smelzer recently told the *Los Angeles Times* that the market he could offer national advertisers was "Hollywood at home ... that 35-year-old producer who lives in Los Feliz who just bought a $400,000 house and drives a BMW Z3 convertible, wears Hugo Boss and has a production deal at Raleigh Studios." In the past several months, *Buzz* has lost or let go a number of its strongest writers.

Clay Felker, founder of *New York Magazine* and now director of the Felker Magazine Center at the University of California, Berkeley, says it is pointless to expect politically oriented coverage in city magazines. "These are about elite, high-end consumption — autos, fragrances, watches and jewelry. Los Angeles is undergoing demographic changes of probably historic proportions, but if politics is going to be done, it's going to have to be done in the alternative weeklies. National advertisers don't like history-making demographic changes."

In fact, Los Angeles media may not be all that different from its counterparts elsewhere when it pays scant attention to civic affairs and politics. Ask Yvette Doss. Doss, 26, last year borrowed money from her grandmother to launch an L.A.-based English-language Latino magazine for Hispanic Gen-Xers, a publication she hoped would be the Latino *Harpers*. She wanted *Frontera* to be a forum for Latino culture and politics, but "I've found over the last year and a half," said Doss, "that the only format that is really viable commercially is one that relies less on political commentary and more on pop-culture and entertainment." In otherwords, Doss has enjoyed 18 months of success, but she had to kill the politics.

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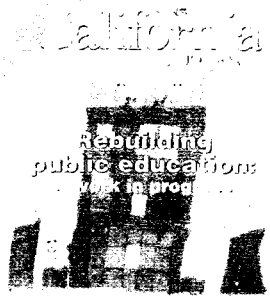

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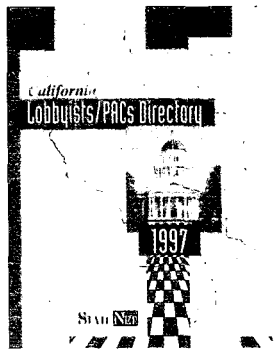

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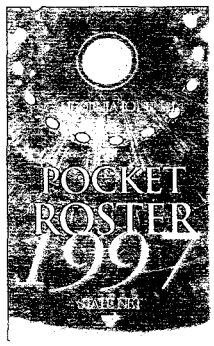

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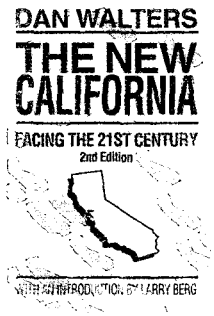

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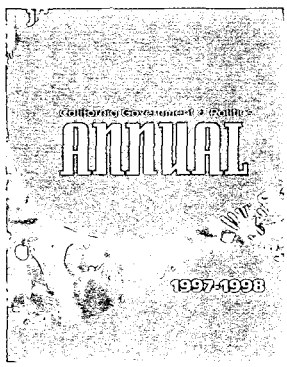

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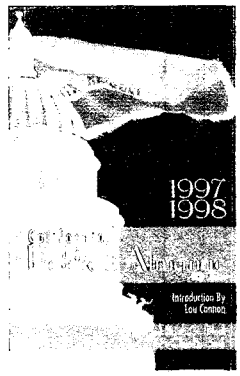

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Washington Notes

perspective

by Laureen Lazarovici

Los Angeles and Congress

Los Angeles is 3,000 miles away from the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. But, politically, it may as well be in another solar system. When the Republican Congress and a Democratic president agree to cut welfare, assistance to legal immigrants and public hospitals, as well as abandon plans to repair crumbling schools, it is hard to argue that L.A.'s interests — or those of other urban centers, for that matter — are at the top of the political agenda these days. Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard sums it up when she says, "I don't think there is an understanding of the uniqueness of L.A.'s problems, so it's hard to get the support we need from our colleagues."

Despite their partisan and ideological differences, political leadership in Washington is concentrated in the hands of Southerners: President Bill Clinton is from Arkansas; House Speaker Newt Gingrich represents Marietta, Georgia; and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott hails from Mississippi.

In contrast to that roster, L.A.'s congressional delegation operates at multiple levels of marginality. For starters, it is overwhelmingly Democratic in a Republican Congress. The few GOP members from the county — those who would presumably have more access to the Republican leadership — can't be expected to offer a counterweight. They tend to represent the city and county's far-flung suburbs (for example, Buck McKeon's northwest San Fernando Valley, which would like to secede from the city entirely) and have little in common with their inner-city colleagues.

The delegation is heavily African-American and Latino in a Congress where ending affirmative action, limiting immigration and curtailing welfare have been at the top of the agenda. And it is not only alienated from the Republican leadership, it is a delegation probably a bit more liberal than House Democrats in general, and certainly more liberal than Clinton's increasingly real vision of a more centrist party. And few of the GOP's rising stars are from L.A. One exception is David Dreier, who is close to Gingrich and who has the number-two spot on the powerful Rules Committee, which decides the parameters — and sometimes by extension, the outcome — of debate on legislation.

The syndrome that affects the whole state — ABC, Anybody But California — could apply to L.A. double time. Sure, California has the biggest delegation at 52 members. But Los Angeles County alone has 17 — bigger than most state delegations. A group that large and diverse can't be expected to agree on issues, especially parochial ones. For instance, Valley members battle downtown representatives over subway routes. At the same time, the group can work together when it comes to bringing home the bacon that benefits the whole region, such as earthquake relief and the Alameda corridor project.

While L.A. does have particular advantages and disadvantages in this Congress, its fate is mainly a reflection of the fact that solving urban problems is hardly at the top of anyone's agenda — Democrats' or Republicans'. In fact, critics would argue that two issues at the top of Washington's agenda last year — immigration and welfare reform — will exacerbate urban crises. Certainly, they will have a disproportionate impact on Los Angeles, the nation's new Ellis Island, and a county where one in five people gets some sort of public assistance. There are some measures in the balanced-budget agreement aimed at softening some of the harsher provisions of the new immigration law (liberalizing the cutoffs for some elderly and disabled legal immigrants). But at the same time, there are plans in the agreement to cut reimbursements to hospitals that serve a high proportion of indigent patients, which will hurt L.A. County.

Another example: Clinton's $5 billion plan to help states and localities pay the interest on bonds for school repair and construction would have been a boon for urban areas. Los Angeles Unified School District would have gotten $115 million over five years, more than any city except New York and Chicago. And no one could call the plan ambitious. A report from the General Accounting Office found that it would take $112 billion to repair all of the nation's crumbling schools. But the construction plan was left on the cutting room floor during the administration's negotiations with congressional leaders for a five-year balanced budget deal. Significantly perhaps, it was the only one of Clinton's high-profile education initiatives not to make it into the plan. "We were the only ones thrown to the wolves," complained a lobbyist for urban schools.

Los Angeles and other urban areas must increasingly realize that help from Washington will be hard to get. It is not an easy lesson to learn. As Harold Meyerson reported in the *L.A. Weekly*, even some of the city's conservative politicians are beginning to say that it is difficult for cities to go it alone. In a speech opposing the city's living wage ordinance, Councilman Hal Bernson said it was Congress (not local government) that should enact stronger minimum wage and national health care legislation.

Bernson's conversion, as it were, seems oddly mistimed. Only a few weeks earlier, as if in anticipation of the failure on the federal level, Los Angeles voters approved a $2.4 billion bond measure for schools. Voters will likely have to continue taking matters into their own hands as long as Washington keeps washing its hands of the problems of urban America.

Laureen Lazarovici, a former California Journal *associate editor, covers Congress for* Education Daily, *an indepedent newsletter based in Alexandria, Virginia.*

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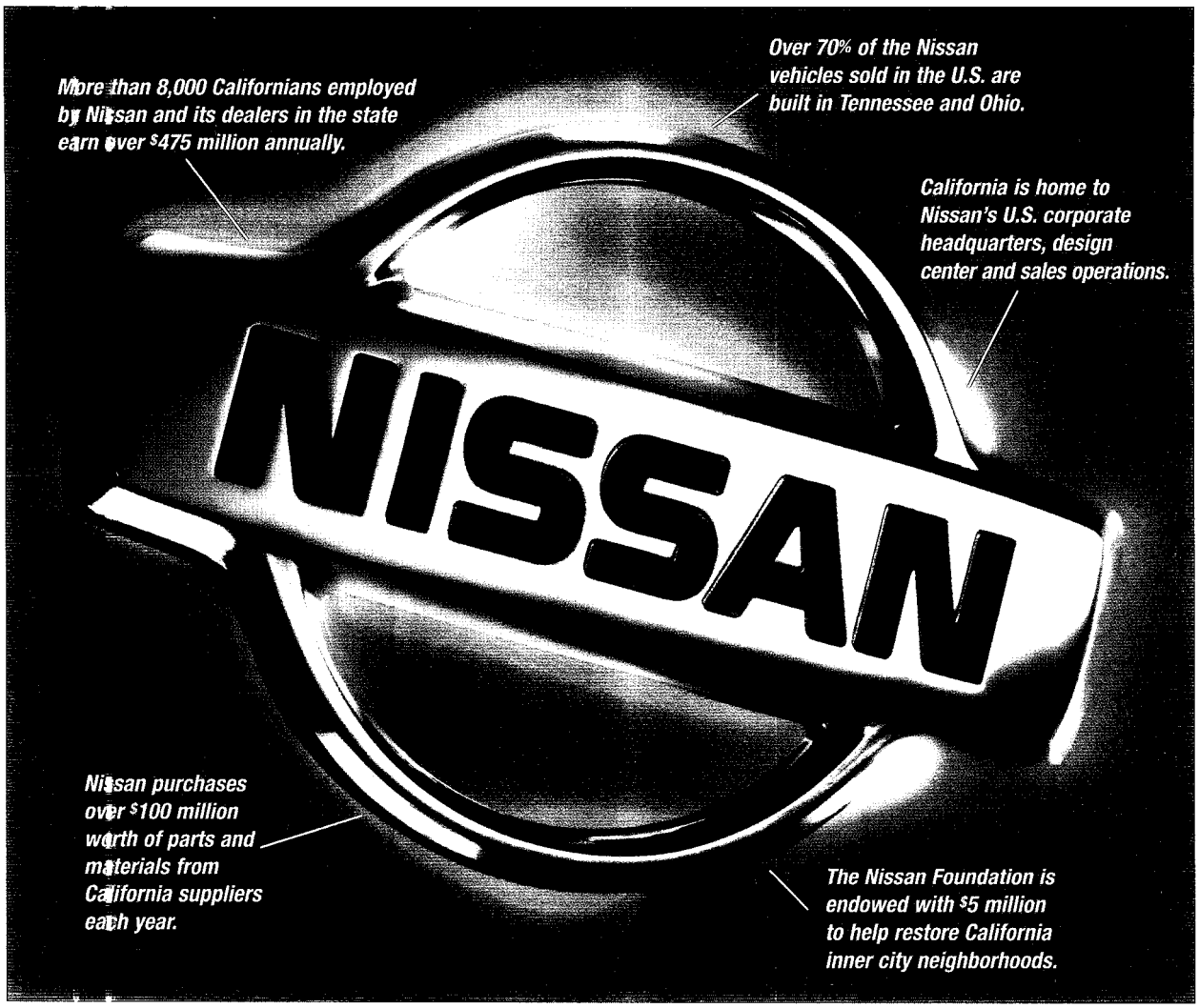
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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1996

Southland Smog Drops to Lowest Level in Decades

■ **Environment:** Fewer Stage One alerts have been called, although pollution still exceeded health standards on 87 days. Officials credit cleaner-burning gasoline.

By MARLA CONE, TIMES ENVIRONMENTAL WRITER

The Southern California smog season that ends this week has been the best in decades, and air quality officials say the state's new cleaner-burning gasoline deserves much of the credit.

Although the fight against dirty air in the four-county region around Los Angeles has made steady progress, the 1996 season stands out as substantially better than even last year, which had the fewest serious smog episodes in more than 40 years of record-keeping.

Stage One alerts, which indicate severe bouts of pollution, were triggered on seven days, half the number reported last year by the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Health advisories—when residents are warned to limit time outdoors—occurred on 52 days, down from 59 in 1995, according to the agency.

The Los Angeles region also lost one of its most dubious distinctions: The nation's worst smog day this year was in Houston, which hit a peak of 0.26 parts per million of ozone—more than twice the limit deemed healthful under the federal standard and barely edging out May 11 in Crestline in the San Bernardino Mountains.

[illegible] the good news, there [illegible] in the [illegible]

Breathing Easier

This year was a landmark one for smog. There were far fewer Stage 1 smog alerts and a decline in health advisories, even compared to 1995, which was a record-breaking year.

[illegible] alerts

*through Oct. 29

We were there at the beginning. In fact, we *were* the beginning.

This front-page story in the Los Angeles *Times* was good news for all of us. The air in Southern California is cleaner than it was years ago. In fact, cleaner than it was less than a year ago. Officials credit the reformulated gasoline required in California as of June 1, 1996. ARCO pioneered this fuel back in 1989. We're proud that it's chasing smog away, as it was designed to do. And we're thankful to government regulators, auto designers, and the conscientious driving public who have helped make cleaner air a reality, for today and days to come.

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